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COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTIONS TO: TANK RACER, SMASH COURT TENNIS 2 AND CIVILIZATION II

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ANNA KOURNIKOVA'S SMASH COURT TENNIS™

10 Summer Of Disc Content

ON THIS MONTH'S 10 10 FREE DEMO DISC

You may have grazed the media over the previous few weeks and heard talk of a total eclipse occurring. Maybe this filled you with awe at the cosmic Logos, impelling you to witness this spectacle. Pah, eclipses? They occur every decade or so. STATION demo's will cause far more people to fall prostrate in awe and utter bovine sounds such as 'oohhhh'. What's more, take your STATION disc and hold it in front of your face; et voila! Instant eclipse! We are the masters of metaphysics...

PLAYABLE DEMO

- BLOODY ROAR 2
- AIRONAUTS
- POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING
- CROC (PLATINUM)
- THREE LIONS

ROLLING VIDEO

- R/C STUNT COPTER
- CROC 2

ROLLING VIDEO

R/C: STUNT COPTER

PUBLISHER: Virgin
GAME TYPE: Flight Sim

The concept of insentient objects possessing emotional states is a curious one. Why is the stunt copter RC? Is this to be followed with a glut of titles such as Despondent Chair and Euphoric Tin Opener?

The tale of how the game came about is the stuff of after-dinner anecdote. David Perry, the guru behind the game, is an enthusiast of R/C copters and repeatedly destroyed them via inept flying. He reached the conclusion that playing a realistic R/C copter game on the PlayStation would be considerably more economical than reducing the real thing to costly piles of components, and you wouldn't look such a twat either.

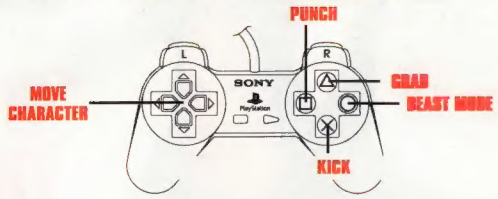
The nippy video we have for you is the stuff of hysteria. For one thing, it features *Pong*, albeit only briefly.

The video clips will give you an insight into the fluid nature of the game as well as the dementia of Perry himself, and his disturbing cohorts. The realism of the title is extraordinary, with the aerodynamics of the stunt copter staggeringly realistic. Controls may be something of an endurance test to begin with, but seeing an adept player, such as our Christian, veritably ride the air with stunt copter grace is a worthy sight. R/C Stunt Copter is far more that a simple experience of flight, requiring you to complete manic and leftfield chores such as shooting pigs, dodging pyramids and ramming the side of a barn. And not a single chopper joke mentioned.

The now legendary history begins in a field with several hundred dollars worth of wreck. Truth or fiction? We shall never be entirely sure, but the end product is sublime.

PLAYABLE DEMO

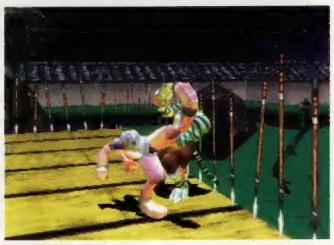
BLOODY ROAR 2



PUBLISHER: Virgin

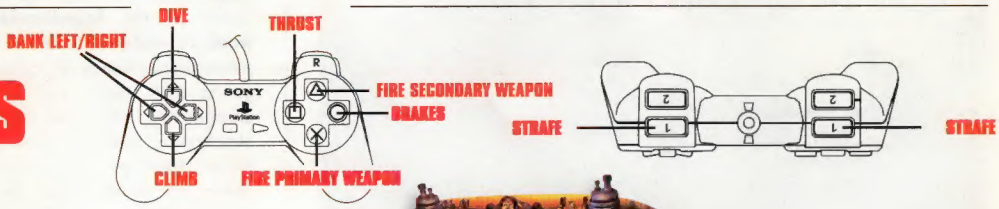
GAME TYPE: Bestial Scrapper

You'll doubtless have heard of the Animal Rights movement, fawning altruists with a penchant for small and cute animals, not to mention white jeans and mullets. Nasty. We here at STATION advocate the Animal Fights movement; frenzied beasts flailing luminescent attacks in a paroxysm of rage. Which is why we all adore Bloody Roar 2. Combat begins innocently enough, with a diverse range of characters going through the motions of blasé punches and kicks, but Bloody Roar 2, like its antecedent, bestows the pugilists with the arcane ability to spontaneously explode into animal form. Somewhat like the cult TV series *Manimal*, but with slightly more carnivorous beasts and better fashion awareness. In fact, now I mention it, all Manimal ever seemed to do was mutate into a snake in every episode. The savages in Bloody Roar 2 are infinitely more lethal than Gentle Ben, opting instead for more intimidating forms such as lithe bats, venomous insects and burrowing moles. The pace of the game is switchblade-sharp, leaving *Tekken 3* gasping in a trail of high-octane energy. The gameplay suffers not from the pyrotechnics, as one may reasonably expect. Each character boasts a veritable repository of moves and has the animated grace of the finest ballet. Get tooth-and-claw violent with the hackle-raising demo and believe. We awarded it 94%, with good reason. Remember, if it's not cooked, it's Bloody Roar.



PLAYABLE DEMO

AIRONAUTS



PUBLISHER: Take 2

GAME TYPE: Aviation/Combat

If the Wright Brothers had been homicidal maniacs, the world of aviation would be a far more interesting, not to mention deathly, place. *Those Magnificent Men In Their Flying Machines* would in fact be more akin to the animé mech-robots than the more pragmatic and dull planes we have today. Overseas flights would be fraught experiences: "BING" *This your captain speaking. We are under attack from flight SD-118, and their captain is about to unleash cadmium missiles. Please man the gun turrets and sign your wills. Smoke 'em if you got 'em* "BING". Aironauts presupposes a similar vein of future, a sprawling dystopia where the only thing to land after your flight may well be your steaming, bullet-ridden carcass. Grasping an innovative way to alleviate the penal system's overcrowding problem, Aironauts allows convicts to participate in a dynamic gameshow; winners are emancipated from their sentence and losers get a state funeral. One of the reasons that Aironauts surprises and enthrals is thanks to the stepped, criteria based gameplay as opposed to routine and derivative flight-combat. Strap on your flying rig and blast off through countless levels of manoeuvring action, with tasks set such as fragging drones, controlled flight-through-ring sequences and tense combat against the Aironaut champions. We've given you four stages to whet your wings, so crack out the video of *The Running Man* and get survivalist.

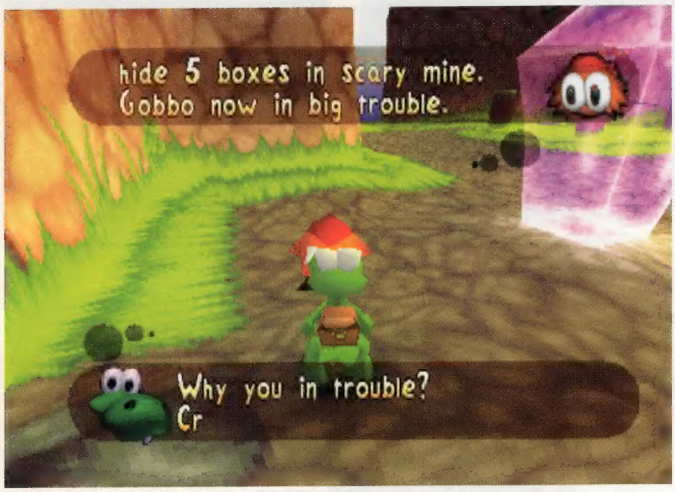
ROLLING VIDEO

CROC 2

PUBLISHER: EA
GAME TYPE: Platformer

It is the unwritten rule of both the movie and gaming worlds that the sequel will always be inferior to the classic original. Of course there are always exceptions to this law, whether it be the celluloid genius of The Empire Strikes Back or the pixelated wonder of Street Fighter 2. Many were captivated by the colour and cartoon qualities of *Croc*, and these people will be holding their breath to see if Croc 2 can live up to expectations. Now here is your chance to feast your eyes on the little green fella as he embarks on a number of crazy new missions in bigger and brighter fashion. Once again you will encounter the Gobbos, probably the most foolish games characters ever. Croc 2 is more complex, faster and much harder than the last outing and as this rolling demo should show, it is eye candy of the highest order. Watch the cute jumping, tail-waggling superhero as he runs around trying to please everybody, again.

ABOVE: Once more into the breach, dear friends, once more... Croc returns in a genuine overhaul of the now Platinum original.



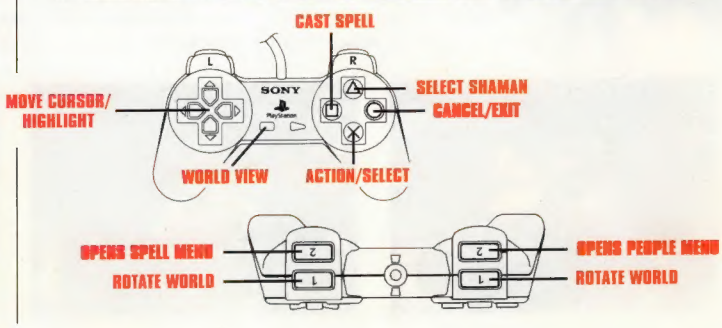
ABOVE: Croc and his Gobbos have difficulty with basic sentence structure. A refresher course on definite articles and verb conjugations seems to be required.

PLAYABLE DEMO

POPULOUS: THE BEGINNING

PUBLISHER: EA
GAME TYPE: God–Sim

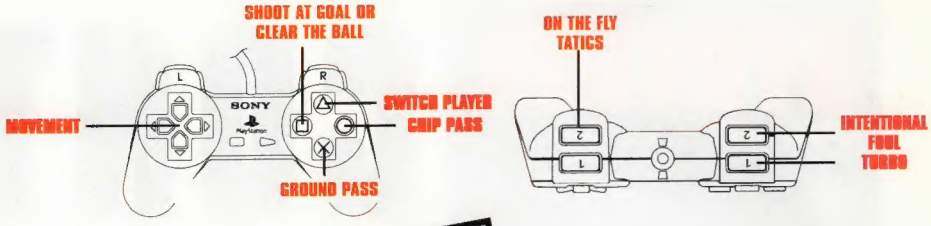
We all have a desire to be deified, to become a god enfleshed with the respect and reverence it commands. Create worlds in days, have all the beer you could possibly want and get a magnificent view into the changing rooms of the Scandinavian pro-women's volleyball team. The ethics of salvation and morality can, quite literally, go to hell when you have this omnipotency, and you can smite blasphemers down for owning Manic Street Preachers albums.Experienced gamers will lovingly recall the classic, genre defining game *Populous*. The premise saw you as an antinomian deity striving to evolve a population and gain dominion over increasingly volatile worlds. When your tribe reigned supreme, and you had all the acolytes you need, you would be rewarded with awesome powers. Populous: The Beginning is a precursor to the original *Populous*. You assume the guise of a potent shaman who has not yet ascended to deity status, with a smattering of divine powers and a handful of loyal followers. The game takes place in a rotateable 3D world with the mechanics of *Command & Conquer* – construct buildings and warriors to increase your 'manna' power, which you can use to cause awesome natural disasters on the territory of opposing forces, such as volcanoes or earthquakes. Populous: The Beginning appeals to the megalomaniac in us all and is certainly more amusing than mass.



PLAYABLE DEMO

THREE LIONS

PUBLISHER: Take 2
GAME TYPE: Footie Sim



If any mortal man truly had three lions on his shirt, his entrails would be a feast for the marauding beasts. Such morons should stay out of the lion enclosures; there are better ways to make money than getting a video of yourself being gorged by lions on You've Been Framed. Three Lions, as the title will suggest to all but most myopic of individuals, is a football game. Moreso, it's an official England team licence; as if forking out scandalous sums for new kits every two weeks was not punishment enough. Three Lions, on reflection however, is a life enhancing game. Consider the dichotomy: you could spend 90 minutes stood amongst malodorous, babbling men, straining for a view of the match whilst gingerly eating a hot dog that most probably contains dog. You could, however, relax, crack open a medicinal Dr Pepper and enjoy Three Lions in the comfort of your own four walls. The game proper is an accomplished title, with the animation prowess of Dissent and the tight control of Beckham in the box (or should that be posh box, pirate?).

One of the joys of the Three Lions experience is the ease of application, designed to be slightly more 'pick up and play' than the more sober football simulations that require the dexterity of Bishop from *Aliens* to master. The mechanics of the game remain loyal to its real-life inspiration, as you would expect. Enjoy this demo, and if you see a copy on the cheap, grab it.

PLAYABLE DEMO

CROC PLATINUM

PUBLISHER: EA
GAME TYPE: Reptilian Platformer

The corpulent, moustachioed Italian plumber has a lot to make amends for. Not only has he worn the same outfit for years and soiled the honour of the dainty princess, but the seminal Super Mario 64 has spawned a wealth of emulators. With Hermes-like speed, the PlayStation became bombarded with 3D exploration games, boasting an interactive and credible world and a protagonist that one could associate with, becoming one with the strange Jungian archetype. Some deluded mind, scavenging for ideas at an otherwise unproductive board meeting, considered alternatives for EA's stab at the 3D genre. Wombat? Too odorous. Sloth? Too apathetic? Crocodile? Interesting, but we'll have to pervert the essential nature of the beast, diluting it into a bastardised cute/moneymaking hybrid. Yea, Croc was born. The plot of Croc sees our scaly hero attempting to save the muff-like Gobbos from the wrath of the malicious Baron Dante. Not the visionary Italian poet, though, sadly. The world of Croc is bright, gaudy, crisp and essentially pacifist. He is able to defend himself with a tail-whip or by crushing foes with his anus. Pleasant. Croc is packed with fantastic touches, such as the music, hidden areas and graphical diversity which will impress as you climb and smash your way through the nifty 3D worlds. Especially noteworthy are the boss characters, my personal favourite being the boxing ladybird. A bargain at twenty nicker, Guv.

Croc encounters a large pink snake somewhere deep in the bush. Nothing out of the ordinary then...

STATION

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Take to the sky as you control your miniature helicopter and try to keep the little fella airborne.

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JULY 1999

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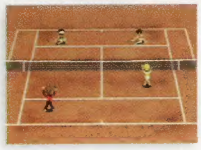

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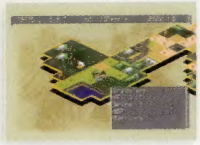

FLYINGSQUAD

He showed up in a town a few years back, didn't have a name, didn't have a past.

We've been pledging this title for quite sometime now, but at last Shiny's unrivalled R/C Stunt Copter is with us. Last month, at the Electronics Entertainment Expo, I tracked down Dave Perry and his meticulous clan of developers to steal the only reviewable code available in the world. Yep, STATION brings you yet another world exclusive! To coincide with the first review, our demo disc has a rolling demo of R/C Stunt Copter to moisten your appetite for next month's exclusive playable version.

As I've already mentioned, the Electronics Entertainment Expo popped its head up in Los Angeles last month, so we've a ten page feature busting with all the new software developers are producing for Christmas and for the year 2000.

Our exclusive disc also includes an immense playable demo of Red Lemon's Aironauts, the awesome Bloody Roar 2 from Virgin, and Bullfrog's sequel to the monumental Populous.

DAZZA • *Darren Herridge* – **Editor**

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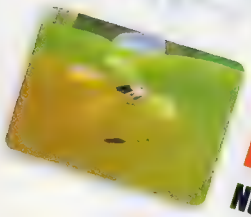
VIDEO

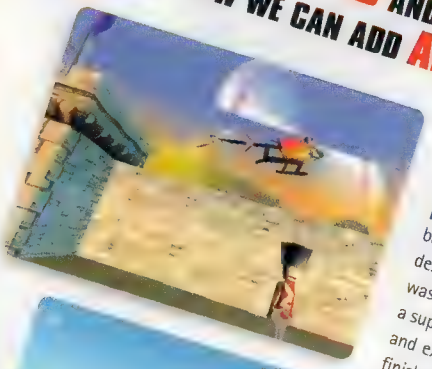
"It takes a good deal of dexterity, spatial awareness and downright patience to become competent enough to even attempt the simplest levels..."

GAME KILLED THE Radio Controlled Star

PUBLISHER: Interplay **DEVELOPER:** Shiny **RELEASE DATE:** August **GAME TYPE:** Arcade Flight Sim
NO. OF PLAYERS: 1–2 **PRICE:** £39.99 **COMPATIBILITY:** Dual Shock Analog, Memory Card



AIRWOLF. BLUE THUNDER. THE HELICOPTER FROM SKIPPY. THE ROSTER OF RESPECTED AND FAMOUS CHOPPERS IN HISTORY TRULY STIRS THE BLOOD. NOW WE CAN ADD ANOTHER ONE TO THE LIST...



IT'S COME A LONG WAY, BABY,

this quirky little airborne number that doesn't fit into any particular videogame category. We first played it at ECTS way back in September, where it was only a one-level teaser demo specifically designed to let the lumpen masses there get to grips with it easily, but it was still obvious that underneath the dastardly difficult control method was a super-playable game that would be uniquely challenging. Suitably impressed and excited, we went back to our crib here in Exeter and eagerly awaited the finished code to plop onto the doorstep. Nine scant months later here we are, with the first playable version to be seen by any mag in the known world, and the big question (as ever) is whether the long and tedious delay has been a worthy one. The answer to this may be obvious, what with it being on our cover and everything, so we're hence glad to report that the Other Dave Perry (as he is known in these parts, to distinguish artful Shiny programmer from flamboyant STATION publisher) has sprinkled his trademark handful of pixie gameplay dust all over R/C Stunt Copter, and thus it sparkles like Tinkerbell after she's been rammed forcibly into a jar of glitter.

DID YOU KNOW...

Bearded television guru Noel Edmonds has an almost intimate knowledge of helicopters. So profound is his awareness that he is reputed to be able to recognise specific models purely via their engine sound.

Control, Control, You Must Learn Control

To ease you into the game nice and gently, a series of assisted training sections must be mastered before you can take the controls in free flight. Each aspect of the flight interface is tackled seperately, then combined for the final tests. It's all broken down as follows:

THROTTLE CONTROL

This first section lets you get to grips with adjusting the helo's altitude by copying an instructor chopper's actions. Tiny squeezes of the throttle shift the ship up or down, but finding the right balance point where it stays stationary for a long enough period to qualify is no picnic.

RUDDER CONTROL

Now you progress on to moving left and right with the aid of the little prop that sits at the back of the tail and keeps the helo in a straight line. All the other controls available are locked in place to help you out. This test is not too tough, so a gold rating should be easy to achieve.

CYCLIC CONTROL

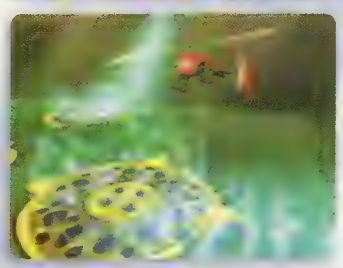
Until here, everything has been controlled by the left stick. Now the right comes into play, with your bird fastened in space but free to rotate and pitch to match the attitude of the other copter. It now becomes apparent how delicate the control inputs must be if you're going to fly with any accuracy.

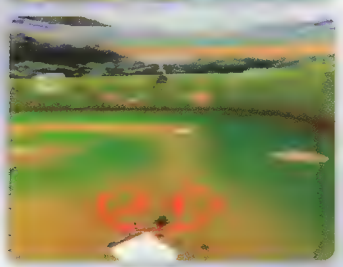
PRACTICAL CYCLIC

With your rudder attitude (the left/right control) locked solid, this section lets you see how tipping the aircraft forwards and to each side generates movement in that direction. Lulling you into a false sense of security, it seems easy at this point. Just you wait, tough guy...

FIRST TEN MINUTES

As long as you are sensible and begin with the training mode, this period will be relatively painless, although it's still no picnic.





ABOVE: This tricky level demands you follow the path of a baseball diamond whilst hovering over a shifting icon.

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: American Football given a fresh slant, R/C style; the Acropolis and the remote copter. I'm sure Socrates would have a field day with that sight; now that angle would turn the stomach of even the most hardcore.

Flight Unlimited

Many of you will probably be thinking 'Oh yeah, it's a boring propellerhead flight sim, send it back to the PC nerds'. You are of course bigoted fools who should be more open-minded when it comes to games, and not just stick to the next bloody *Crash* sequel. But quite apart from that, Stunt Copter is not your common or garden fat-manualled simulator that takes a barrage of keypresses just to get off the ground. For a start, it makes full use of the twin-stick Dual Shock Analog controls, so much so that to play the game without one is nigh on impossible. Shiny even go so far as to recommend that you use a genuine Sony pad, as the level of fine control required shows up the inferior build quality of most third party peripherals. Now, while *Ape Escape* makes similar demands on both thumbs it comes from the angle of *Track and Field* (mimicking the movements of the on-screen character), whereas the controls in this game are representations of the actual flight interfaces on an R/C helicopter.

"...staying in control is a challenge to say the least, and will sort out the Sunday pilots from the top guns ..."

The left stick manipulates the rudder controls, turning the chopper to the left and right in what's known as a yawing

PRACTICAL RUDDER

Now the inverse of the last lesson is true, and you are free to shift vertically and spin on the spot by using the left stick. There are a handful of balloons scattered around to shoot at, which adds some focus to the proceedings, but again it's not too much problem to quickly pass through.

PRACTICAL THROTTLE

On an invisible circular rail, the helo is free to rise and fall at will, popping blue balloons as you go. Finally, a true impression of what it's like to fly, although there are another three levels of increasing responsibility before you're set the final exam test of flying the chopper into the side of a barn.

LEFT: Using the 'proper' distant viewpoint as if controlling a real R/C aircraft is so damn difficult it made my brain itch. It's still cool though.

motion, while pulling back or pushing forward increases the throttle, making it rise and fall vertically (or at least in the direction the rotor blades are facing at any given point). The right hand stick acts as the cyclic control, meaning it adjusts the pitch of the copter's nose up and down and the amount of rotational roll to either side. This sounds like a lot to co-ordinate at any one time, and you're correct, as it's a world away from the usual go faster/slow down controls seen in a driving game. This is due to the unique way a helicopter gains forward movement, very different from the manner in which a propeller drags a plane with it through the air: once in a hover, you must tip the nose of the aircraft downwards, so the force of the rotor disc is pointing forward as well as upwards, increasing the throttle just slightly so you remain at the same height whilst moving ahead. Increasing this angle makes the velocity gain accordingly, with an accompanying rise in throttle power keeping things at a steady altitude. To stop, simply reverse the process, pointing the noise skywards so the force of the blades pushes backwards, acting as a brake. Turning the chopper can be undertaken by either using the rudder so the nose turns on a flat plane or by rolling the aircraft (the ideal method, as it kills less speed through drag).

In itself, all this is reasonably straightforward when each manoeuvre is undertaken independently, but trying to combine any of the above soon has the inexperienced pilot pinwheeling about like a skyborne donkey. The force of momentum rears its hydra-like heads at the slightest provocation unless kept firmly on a leash, while rotating the chopper and simultaneously rolling it can suddenly turn a stable ship onto its back, where of course there is no lift and a spot of plummeting ensues. It's difficult to verbalise quite how easily things can go suddenly wrong from seemingly calm situations – constant and delicate adjustments to both sticks at all times are virtually mandatory.

> "...trying to combine any of the above soon has to the inexperienced pilot pinwheeling about like a skyborne donkey..."

In this current day and age of shallow learning curves and mainstream-bred difficulty levels, you might think that R/CSC has positioned itself out of the skill bracket of most of the PSX massive, and to an extent this may be true considering the whinging that difficult tasks such as the licence tests in *Gran Turismo* brought about. Shiny has therefore wisely put together a training mode that holds your hand all the way through the most basic functions of the helicopter (see boxout) and let me tell you, it's damn well necessary. Even so, the first two helicopters you get to fly are equipped with the airborne equivalent of bike stabilisers that keep the rotor blades away from the ground and generally help to keep things upright, and not in many tiny plastic pieces.

Taken To Task

Once the introductory levels are out of the way, the game proper begins, with differently themed areas requiring you to undertake the expected series of increasingly more tricky tasks. These span from the reasonably straightforward, such as hovering over a particular spot for a count of five, flying through a hoop and then landing on an H-pad and racing the length

COMPETITION

AIRONAUTS

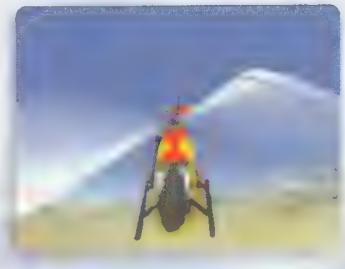
More thrust-and-turn shenanigans, although it's a hell of a lot easier to get to grips with.

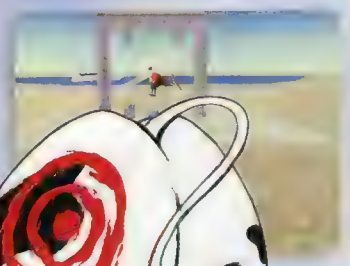
86%

WARHAWK

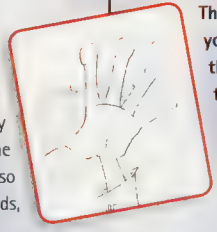
Absolutely dissimilar to this game, apart from that you fly a helicopter, of course.

65%





THAT'S NOT VERY HELPFUL



There's an interesting variation on what you might expect to be in a two player mode in this game. It seems that while player one is doing their best to carry out the already tricky enough flight manoeuvres, player two can place a polygonal hand over your virtual eyeline for a few seconds at key moments. It's an interesting angle for sure, but surely a dedicated split-screen option would have been a more fruitful feature?

DID YOU KNOW...

The Apache 'Longbow', one of the most commonly employed combat copters, has a 'Hover In Ground Effect' of 14,650ft and a vertical rate of climb of 1,775fpm (541mpm). Stimulating, oui?

A FISTFULL OF HELOS

These are the first five choppers that you have access to depending on your performance in the training levels, while a further five are hidden away to unlock with success.

ROOKIE

This equivalent of a flying tricycle has the auto-level feature switched on at all times, which will automatically right the copter if you let go of the controls, plus the big stabilisers are fitted that stop you smacking into the deck. Averaging a bronze star in training will only allow you access to this aircraft, alas.

CAPTAIN

If you get a Gold star in training, then the CPU decides that it's time to start playing properly. All the hand-holding aids are removed and the physics get set at about 90% of reality. It's crashin' time!

PILOT

Getting a Silver rating, however, earns you this less advanced whirlybird that has the auto-level disabled, but unfortunately the stabilisers are still in place. Practice with the Pilot until you are good enough to gain Gold.

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Can you hit the five targets without crashing into the blackboards? I bloody well couldn't...; you'll be seeing this sight a lot, I can guarantee it; if pigs could fly they'd be even harder to damn well hit with your pop gun.

of an American football pitch, yo-yoing back and forth between the two H-posts. Later levels see you sniping at slowly orbiting drone choppers, dodging hopping pyramids (I kid you not) and shooting at hapless pigs on rails. Points are awarded for accuracy, stunts performed and any unburnt fuel remaining (which basically translates into a time bonus). As you complete each tier of five tasks, another level is opened up, but now with slightly more difficult stuff to carry out. The manual is quite emphatic that it's virtually impossible to score perfect marks, and from playing even the earliest and simplest sections it's clear that to fully master the various aircraft would take months (if not years), and to get a super-high score you need to execute stunts whist carrying out the goals of a level.

It's fairly daunting, and that's not even considering using the genuine remote control mode which keeps your viewpoint static while the chopper flies off. Keeping track of what's relative left and right (and even up and down) whilst still staying in control is a challenge to say the least, and will ultimately sort out the Sunday pilots from the top guns.

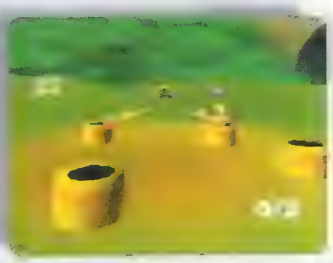
> "...prangs are always disastrous, and are pleasingly destructive, being depicted via the use of 'proper' crash physics that can foster a range of spectacular effects..."

Noel Deadmonds

Of course the greatest hazard facing the prospective pilot is letting the whirling rotor blades come into contact with any solid object, a collision in which the chopper always comes off worst. These prangs are always disastrous, and are pleasingly destructive, being depicted via the use of 'proper' crash physics that can foster a range of spectacular effects, from merely losing your blades through to the sticky-outy bits of the fuselage being progressively torn away, depending on how violent your ditch is. As the wee whirlybird doesn't have a great deal of mass, all the torsional energy in the rotors gets transferred into the body of the copter when they get impeded, meaning more often than not it will ensuingly spin and cartwheel end over end, bouncing off nearby objects convincingly. It's so much more interesting than the usual explosion you'd get in a normal game, and re-emphasises the small scale that everything is working on.

Sound As A Pound

R/CSC is a distinctly unusual game from the ground up, notwithstanding the non-



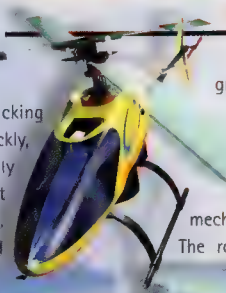
FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: The green and greasy polluted waters around this oil rig are a sombre change from the breezy sunniness of the other levels; shoot the balloon but don't hit the kids dangling below – shades of Point Blank, methinks; No hulking men in shoulder pads here, just a sprint between the uprights to test your airspeed and quick turn abilities.

standard subject matter, control method and lack of marketable characters in the accepted sense. The menu music is wilfully irreverent, with great bellowing ringmaster cries of 'STUUUNT COPTERRR!' punctuating it every so often, while the in-game music is by Lamborghini driving Yank videogame soundtrack playboy, Tommy Tallarico. Your general success or failure is remarked on by a laconic dude voiceover who will give you helpful advice ('lay off the throttle!') or, more likely, snidey sarcasm as you wreck your toy again ('Oh look, I see a tear!'). It's refreshing to hear a voiceover that's not some gravely-throated bugger trying to sound like Thor, although I can see a great many people getting tired of some wisecracking Yankee bloke fairly quickly, despite the impressively large and intelligent vocabulary he can spout. The rest of the sound spectrum is catered for via the angry wasp buzzing of the copter's tiny petrol engine (which sounds suitably authentic to my untrained ears) and the jolly ker-chunk! of numerous collisions.

Daytime Televisión

Easy-going pastorality is the keyword for the look of the game, being mainly set around deserted beaches, woodland clearings and so forth, although the grim industrial drains of the hover levels add some welcome visual variety. Of course the centrepiece of the graphics is the helicopter itself, and accordingly each model is a smartly turned out example of carefully detailed mechanics and intricate paint jobs. The rotor disc blurs round its arc convincingly while the engine exhaust spews out quickly-dispelling fumes at all times, which can actually help you to keep track of your alignment to the ground in an emergency. Otherwise the graphics are understated yet pleasant, the backdrops slip around the foreground action unobtrusively, with subtly-shaded horizons and gentle vapour effects.

"...the centerpiece of the graphics is the helicopter itself, and accordingly each model is a smartly turned out example of carefully detailed mechanics and intricate paint jobs..."



Tough But Fair

It would be naïve to say that everyone will get on with Stunt Copter and become enamoured with it the way we have in the office. It takes a good deal of dexterity, spatial awareness and downright patience to become competent enough to even attempt the simplest levels, and the quick-fix current generation of gamesplayers may shun something which doesn't provide an instant reward. However, all we can say is play the demo on next issue and persevere, 'cos this is a real gamer's game rather than some shallow flash-bang bit of software designed specifically to appeal to your snotfaced younger brother who doesn't like any game where there's no big explosions. If you're willing to sacrifice some time and are ready for a spot of teeth-gnashing you'll fall in love, guaranteed. **CRASHED AND BURNED BY CHRISTIAN SLATER**

ACE

This flame-painted beauty is the Real Deal, with fully realistic flight dynamics and the optional Stunt Mode enabled, which will let you do gravity-defying loops and rolls that would have you kissing the dirt otherwise.

ACE II

Straight outta M*A*S*H, this mean, green machine has similar performance to the previous copter, but with a cool bubble canopy and little stretchers that could ferry Action Man to the field hospital. The other five choppers are a mystery as yet, but rest assured they'll be both extreme and wacky, knowing what the guys at Shiny are like.

AIRBORNE ANORAK ARMADA

Pick a calm and windless day, climb to a high, deserted spot and you may see sights like this. These are the kind of blokes who fly remote control choppers in real life, replete with obligatory headgear. Hmm, best stick to the game methinks...

STATION VERDICT

UPS

Ultra-challenging but ultimately pleasing controls, unusual atmosphere and look, mega playable. A sure fire success.

DOWNS

Necessarily difficult and unforgiving, especially for the heavy-handed. Some levels are over a bit too quickly.

TRIPLE A TITLE

93%

"It'll be met with equal dollops of love and frustration, but you'll be gladdened to the core."

STATION Nation

Won't Somebody Please Think Of The Children?

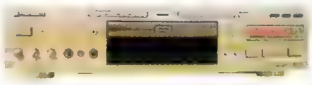
Dear STATION,

Why is it that Sony do not seem to cater for the family with the majority of their titles? I bought my daughter a PlayStation for Christmas with *Crash Bandicoot*, but now she seems to come home from school with horrific titles such as *Resident Evil*. Nintendo seem to be much more family orientated with Mario and his ilk, so why can't Sony follow their example? I must congratulate STATION for including a demo of the *Rugrats* game on your disc which I was happy to see my daughter purchase and enjoy.

*Thereso Bundy, via e-mail

Up 'til fairly recently the main chunk of the PSX userbase was 12-25 year old males who, as you might be aware, lap up unpleasantness as seen in the Resident Evil series with glee (and much spending power, more importantly). However, in the last year or so the PlayStation has become an affordable purchase for parents to make for younger children, and accordingly the number of games aimed solely at the very young is rising – see Croc 2, Running Wild and A Bug's Life for example. None of these would particularly appeal to an older gamer, but have nevertheless sold well (extremely well in the case of A Bug's Life, mainly off the back of kiddies who have seen the flick of course). Rest assured there will be more – although when developers' attentions start to switch to the PlayStation 2, they may not want to spend their time and resources knocking out relatively simple and unsophisticated games. Nevertheless, the PSY will be a huge mainstream appliance, and thus penetrate (as they say) into every sector of the age demographic (as they probably also say).

LETTER OF THE MONTH



HOT TOPICS

As so many of you seem to be apathetic when it comes to informed debate, here are a few pithy suggestions that may spark off some lively and interactive discussion (and mean we don't just have letters moaning about demo discs not working).

What would be the most you'd pay for the PSY on its release?

Is there any point playing coin-ops any more?

Why are most PSX steering wheels so much poorer in build quality and feel than their (admittedly more expensive) PC equivalents?

Apart from a few very rare exceptions most games that originate in the US are pretty dull. Why is this?

GET IN TOUCH!

Got anything you wanna get off your chest? Then drop us a line at:

STATION MAGAZINE
Rapide Publishing,
1 Roman Court,
48 New North Road,
Exeter EX4 4EP
or email the Editor:
darren@rapide.co.uk

...and remember, the Letter Of The Month will receive a brand new shiny DVD Player courtesy of JoyTech

Won't Somebody Please Think Of The Children? II

Dear STATION,

I have noticed that some titles on the shelves have BBFC classifications on them, such as *Grand Theft Auto* which is an 18. Why is it that some games have these and others do not? Did the makers of *GTA* actually send their game to get a rating just to make it appear more daring and exciting to the consumer, or does the BBFC have the power to demand to see games before they are released? Surely it should be all or nothing, ie. every game should be rated or they should all be allowed onto the shelves unhindered. This piecemeal censorship appears to me to be a strange and pointless idea.

*Steven Grohom, Kent

Our theory is that an 18 certificate adds some bad-boy kudos to a game and makes the impressionable 10-16 year olds aspire to owning something they shouldn't. GTA had themes of drug running and intimidatory violence so arguably was of an 'adult' theme, particularly as you took the role of an unabashed crim. GT Interactive's Driver cunningly (if sappily) avoids this possibility by making your character an undercover cop, making it all seem all right and not worthy of classification as your underlying motives are noble rather than purely selfish. All this, while books can contain scenes of extreme violence and sexuality without any hint of a certificate!

Hard Discount

Dear STATION,

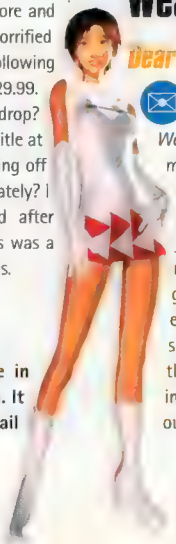
I spent months saving my money for the latest *Ridge Racer* game and on the Friday of its release went to the local Megastore and happily gave them my cash. I was horrified when I visited the store again the following week and found that *R4* was now only £29.99. Why was there this sudden price drop? Couldn't they have merely released the title at this price to start with rather than ripping off the loyal fans who purchased it immediately? I understand when games are reduced after months out and flagging sales, but this was a much hyped title flying off of the shelves.

*Andy Smith, Stoke

Oh dear Andy, you're not alone in our postbag with this justified moan. It appears that Sony and the major retail chains were expecting Ridge Racer 4 to do a Gran Turismo in terms of sales, but you, the public, rightly looked through the excellent advertising and saw the game for what it was, an unsophisticated if pretty piece fluff and kept your cash in your pocket with thoughts of GT2. Virgin's tactic is extreme and will possibly annoy Uncle Sony, but the bright side is that a price war may be triggered off if every Triple-A title is 'aggressively' cut-priced so early after its release.

Your Powers Are Weak, Young Man

Dear STATION,



Am I the only person in the world that hasn't gone *Star Wars* crazy? Every magazine on the market seems to be crammed with articles and pictures to plug the new movie and game. Do journalists really believe that the new *Phantom Menace* game is going to be the greatest thing on earth, or are they just chucking some load of licensed rubbish on the cover to sucker the consumer into giving George Lucas more of our hard earned dosh? Don't get

JOYTECH EUROPE

IMPRESSIVE TECHNOLOGY PRIZE ALERT!

From now on, the best letter we print each month will receive a shiny new Pioneer DV-K101 DVD player courtesy of the fine guys and gals at JoyTech, so get your brain cells working and scribble something that's interesting, dammit.

THE VOICE OF REASON with Nick White

Ban the obtuse angle! Seeing through the eyes is evil and unwholesome! Whilst this may sound like the puritanical diatribe of a Billy Graham-style forum for insane Christians, it is actually the voice of puritan America. As we are all aware, the 'Trenchcoat Mafia' shootings were tragic; the consequence of frustrated and misguided adolescent minds. America, however, cannot accept this horrendous act as a monster that it has spawned itself, instead blaming violent television, cinema and videogames. Yes, as is almost inevitable, videogames are, ridiculously, a scapegoat for these shootings, obviously ignoring the fact that the Trenchcoat Mafia were borderline Nazi's, and when did you ever see a videogame claiming that white supremacy was the way forward? So eager is moral America to divert the blame from its own society and onto passive hobbies that several Senators are lobbying to make first-person shooters ILLEGAL. One panel member, Lieutenant Colonel David Grossman, described these games as 'mass murder simulators'. Somewhat ironic that an military Colonel should attempt to ban violent software. Need I only mention Vietnam?

This asinine attitude begs the question: what makes a game a 'third-person shooter'? Are we to ban *Metal Gear Solid* when you look through Solid Snake's eyes? Is *Tomb Raider* to be abolished because of the look function? Is *Croc 2* to be impounded if the camera angle swoops down to an angle that may be construed as first-person? Perish the thought, but maybe America should consider rescinding its blasé gun laws and alleviating the dissatisfaction of poverty first.

me wrong, I am a fan of the trilogy, but would rather buy an original game rather than a lazy cash-in.

*Richard Jones, Swansea

While everyone is entitled to their opinion Richard, you are wrong. There's a snidey backlash starting from those areas of society who think that just because everyone likes something they should make a show of being different and saying it's not very good. The Phantom Menace WILL be amazing, even if you forget crappy stuff like plot and dialogue and just absorb the amazing universe that Lucas creates. The man hasn't made a movie for twenty years remember – he's bound to have two decades worth of ideas to get out. While this is probably not answering your assertion I just needed to get it off my chest. As for the game, well, it could go either way, couldn't it? It doesn't look bad, but it probably won't redefine any genres either (despite what some other rival mags might gush – after visiting Skywalker Ranch just to review it remember).

Role Reversal

Dear STATION,

Final Fantasy VIII getting 71%? What the hell is Christian on about? I've had the honour of playing an import version and I can claim that it runs rings around the previous game. By miles. Just because the game was in Japanese doesn't mean you have to give it a shite mark. The graphics are still awesome and the gameplay still just as fluid. And what does Christian think he's doing with knocking us RPG fans? Just because we enjoy a game that doesn't involve fighting and driving, are we suddenly nerds and outcasts? Try and get the bigger picture when reviewing import games, eh?

*Edgar Wilmarth, Wilts

CHRISTIAN: I would be worried about incurring the wrath of RPG fans but they'd be too scared to leave their bedrooms in case the sun did something nasty to their collection of pet blackheads. I can guarantee I've played more PSX RPGs than you have, and they're all guilty of poor production values, ridiculous and clichéd plots that would've been rejected from an episode of He-Man and lumpen turn-based fighting that is more like fighting a calculator. And no I don't care.

Sporting A Grudge

Dear STATION,

This is a plea to the cash obsessed software companies: stop releasing so many sports games! I understand that it is supply and demand, but if my son is spending months to save up for this year's best football game only to find that it is superseded a few months later by a slightly tweaked version with '2000' after the name, then isn't he entitled to feel slightly cheated? Fans of FIFA or NBA or NHL are sitting targets and the industry uses this to exploit them to the max. I know this will fall on deaf ears but please think of the consumer once in a while, for we can't all afford to buy every version.

*James Alexander,Coventry

The prime culprit for this kind of behaviour is of course Electronic Arts, who will get a sports licence and then sequelise it on the year, every year, tarting up bits and pieces and relying on brand recognition (ugh) to do the rest. The plain fact is that sports sims will sell: football games on these shores, and basketball/ice hockey/gridiron football in the US. As far as EA is concerned there's no point putting out risky games when you can guarantee £x million from another FIFA. Only we as consumers can break the cycle, although its position seems pretty unassailable, thanks to hordes of undiscerning gamesbuyers.

e-M@il NATION

Contacting STATION is now as easy as falling off a chair and marginally quicker.

Please Release Me, Let Me Go...

Dear STATION,

Why do games companies insist on constantly changing the release dates of their titles? Having read about games coming out and seeing the reviews, I go to the shop only to discover that it has been put back by a month or longer. If these games are reviewable then why are they not releasable? Do the companies hope we will forget a dodgy review if they keep it away from us for a while? I waited so long for the game *Monkey Hero* that by the time it was in stock I had spent the money on something else. Stick to release dates and we can budget accordingly.

*Timothy Homill, Via Email

Fair criticism Tim, although the publishers would spout a number of excuses – availability of black discs, licensing problems and distribution gripes. What they won't admit to is troubles with Sony's QA (Quality Assurance) tests putting them behind schedule or major gameplay problems that are so bad they just can't release a title. Some games (like Rat Attack) are held back so that they can be simultaneously released with the N64 version to ease advertisement costs, whilst the unfortunate R/C Stunt Copter was delayed thanks to the developer's parent company merging with another. It's a pain in the derrière but is genuinely unavoidable in most cases.

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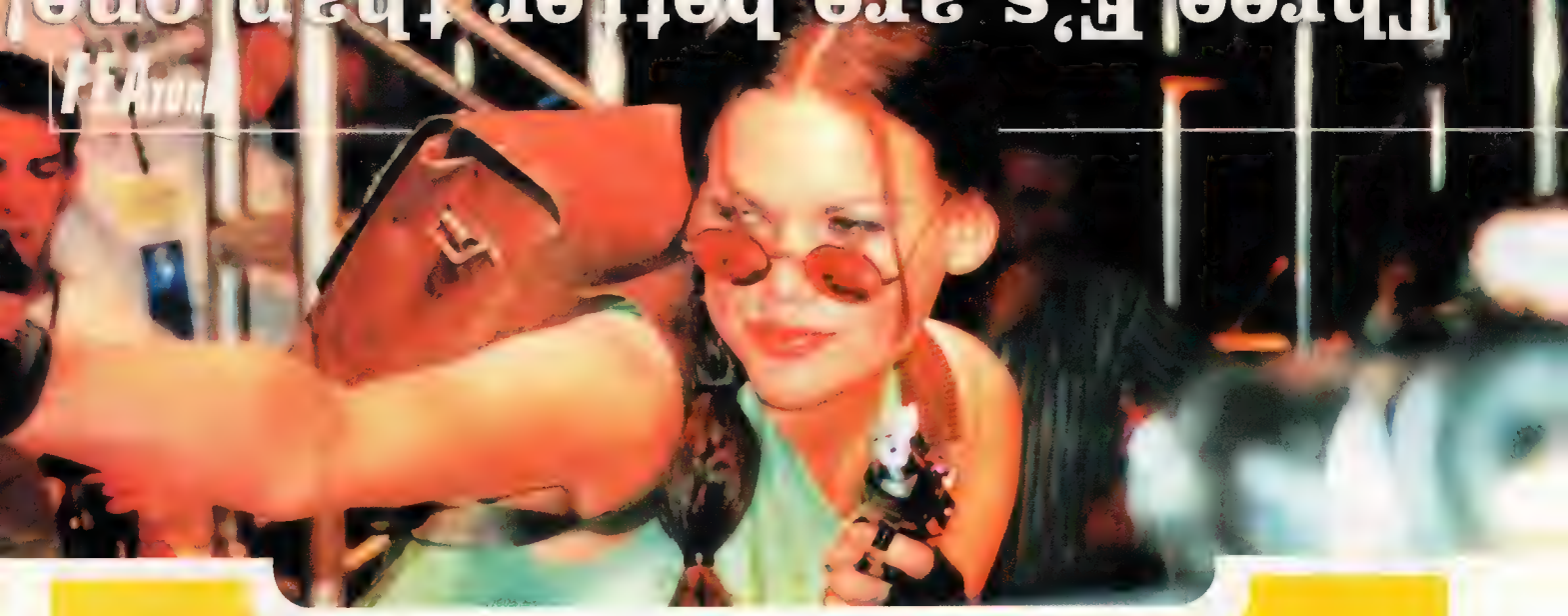


E3 — Electronics Entertainment Expo. The largest annual gathering of people connected to the games industry. The place to see and be seen with the obligatory wall to wall hired totty dressed up as God's knows what. Dazza was there of course, and brought back reams of info on literally hundreds of new games, most of which are seen for the first time anywhere below. Feast your eyes, wet your lips, stroke your anticipation into life and get a load of what the last year of the PSX will have to offer.

SONY

CRASH TEAM RACING
RELEASED: Autumn

In the same way that Mario grew too big for his platforming boots and decided to sit behind the wheel of a go-cart, now the latest jumping hero straps on a seat belt and puts the pedal to the metal. Based in the same universe as the previous three adventures, CTR features a new dangerous villain in the form of Nitros Oxide, who, following a hideous accident in his childhood, was trasformed into a crazy speedy freak of nature. He would challenge everyone to races and never be defeated, but now Neo Cortex gathers together everyone to take him on for one final battle before Oxide can use his crazy new weapon, The Hyper Activator; a power beam which can turn the whole planet into a super fast speedzone. The single player can race in an adventure mode over 20 different tracks or as part of a grand prix against fierce competitors, or test oneself in the time trial mode. In multiplayer there is an added battle mode where you test not only your skill behind the wheel but also your combat technique. As in more serious racing titles you can customise your car for maximum results and the tracks are strewn with power ups in the familiar shape of the '?' boxes. With various fun elements such as the ability to pull wheelies, this looks to be one title worth checking out ASAP.

JACKIE CHAN'S STUNTMASTER
RELEASED: Autumn

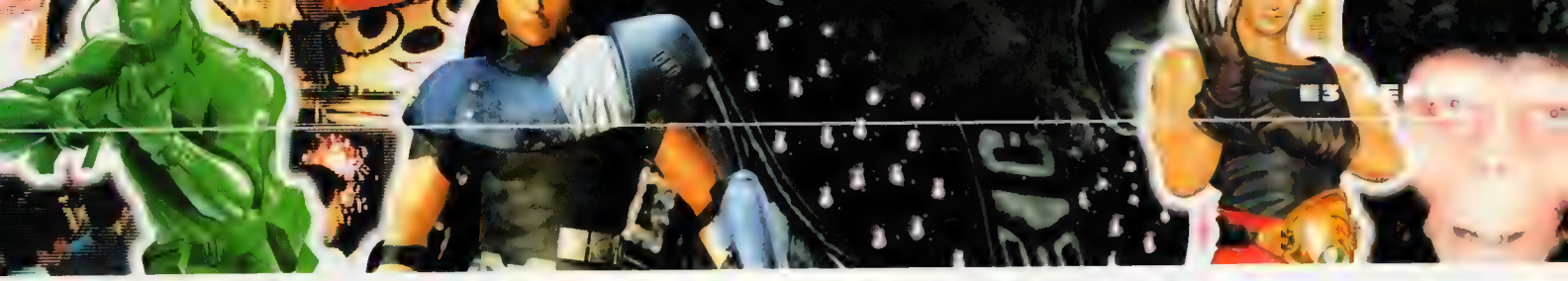
You could suggest that the platform genre is a worn out over-egged pudding of a genre with no space for additions. Yet, if that addition includes martial arts hero Jackie Chan in the title role, then I would have to shut you up with a swift chop in the chops. In pure comedy adventure fashion, the story is set on the streets of Hong Kong as an unscrupulous rival martial arts star has nabbed the latest Chan celluloid classic and done a runner. Jackie doesn't want his loyal fans disappointed and so he goes after the dastardly villain. The idea is to perform stunts to get Chan through the game and this may involve anything from throwing an object to smashing it to smithereens with your nose. With Jackie Chan co-operating in the game it promises to be as authentic as possible and gives the player the chance to step into Chan's shoes.

DESTREGA
RELEASED: Autumn

The problem with regular fighting games is that they are very limited in their appeal as well as often being far from involving. RPGs, on the other hand, suck the player into their world and are seen by some as too complex for their own good. To combat these problems, Destrega merges the two genres together in one title. This means that combatants have the ability to roam wherever they may please around the 3D environments, giving the chance for close combat as well as long distance magical attacks. Fighters can compete in various battle modes as well as in a story option which boasts elaborate cutscenes. Each character has their own magic and the surroundings include various hidden escape routes to be discovered.

DRAGON VALOR
RELEASED: Autumn

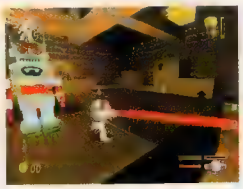
An interesting twist on the ever increasing RPG genre arrives with this follow up to Namco's original arcade hit *Dragon Buster*. As is so often the case, we are once again plunged into a mystical world full of castles and stinking dungeons. The most dramatic things in this scenario, as the title suggests, are the bloomin' huge dragons roaming about trying to turn you into a crispy fritter. A unique element is that actions will affect future scenarios, for example your bride will determine the personality of your child who will himself become the hero of the title in the future. At the end of each stage there lies a huge beast who will have one specific weakness to help you defeat him, as well as powerful attacks to attempt to destroy you.

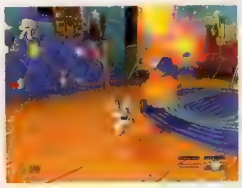


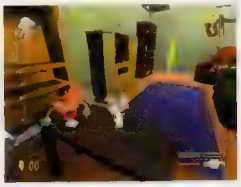
ACTIVISION

TOY STORY 2
RELEASED: Christmas

A licence to print money? Too bloody right mate, considering the undeserved commercial success of *A Bug's Life* was based on the Disney film's popularity rather than the merits of the game. As a sequel to the hilarious CGI film is on schedule for the holiday season, a coinciding game will conveniently arrive at the same time, based around the efforts of the lantern-jawed Buzz Lightyear to rescue his pal Woody from the attentions of a toy collector that probably bears a resemblance to that speccy bloke on *The Big Breakfast*. To infinity and even further beyond!





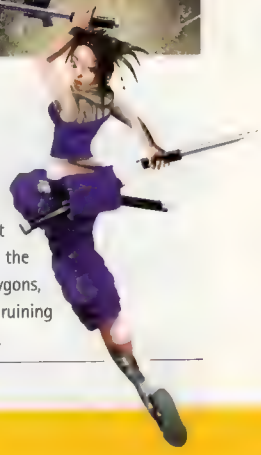


▲ The animated talents of Pixar will once again be employed to bring the play room to life. Cue numerous TV documentaries involving dancing anglepoise lamps. Again.

▼ Stealth is again the word of the moment, as Activision is once again giving you the opportunity to creep like a ninja.

TENCHU II
RELEASED: Spring 2000

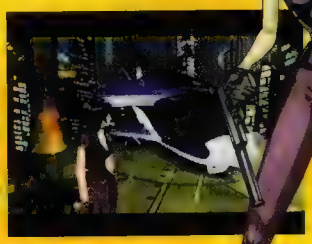
A sequel to the stylish and popular stealth 'em-up is a good idea, and although info is short at this point in time (with the game being at least eight months away) you can be sure the shortcomings of the first will be addressed, such as it's rough-hewn polygons, over-concise levels and godawful Yankee voiceovers ruining the distinctly Japanese atmosphere in the PAL version.

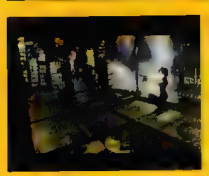


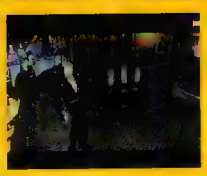
EIDOS

FEAR FACTOR
RELEASED: Winter

This should be a big title when it rolls into the shops sometime near Jesus' birthday, as it's an ambitious and cinematic epic that looks as if it's going for *Metal Gear*-styled tension-fuelled narrative. Fear Factor is centred around the unusual choice of three mercenaries in the pay of a powerful Hong Kong Triad boss whose daughter has been kidnapped. The team must deal with the massive crowds and distinctive scenery of Hong Kong, whilst trying to piece together the mystery of the abduction, depicted via the technique of streaming video backgrounds behind the polygonal action up front, cleverly enmeshing and interacting to create a distinctive whole. The look of the game appears to borrow from classic sources such as *Blade Runner*, *Robocop* and the books of William Gibson, with looming skyscrapers and flashing neon billboards aplenty, while the subtle animé inflections of the lead characters immediately evoke memories of *Ghost in the Shell*. From what we saw, the camera work follows a similar train of thought to *Silent Hill*, with movement and movie-bred techniques that add bags of atmosphere, such as letterboxing the entire game (which handily acts as somewhere to put onscreen menus). Eidos seems to be really pushing the boat out on this one, so we'll be paying it special attention in the near future.

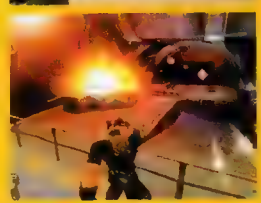






FIGHTING FORCE 2
RELEASED: Winter

While the original *Fighting Force* game from Lara creators Core was a less than noteworthy *Double Dragon* revamp, this sequel promises to be more in the style of *Syphon Filter*, with 3D exploration and stealth play taking over from the meat and potatoes linearity of before. The background story concerns a rogue corporation in the near future which has been covertly creating a breed of synthetic clone soldiers designed to be the ultimate weapon against other corporations. However, the State Intelligence Police (SI-COPS) have caught wind of these dastardly shenanigans and sent in the only man they know who can get the facts without getting killed: Hawk Mason, stupidly-named star of *Fighting Force 1*, this time bereft of his female squeeze assistant. He must penetrate the R&D facilities of the corporation and avoid detection, stealing blueprints, observing experiments and generally skulking about a lot. It'll be interesting to see how this turns out, although it's a good bet it'll look quite a but like *TRIII*.



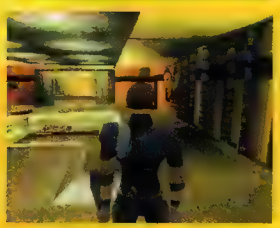
▲ Like Lara with big bangs – there's a interesting thought.

URBAN CHAOS
RELEASED: Autumn

Another gritty inner city drama from the boys at Wimbledon then, and an Apocalyptic one at that. In this slice of three-dee adventurism the world is on the cusp of the realisation of one of Nostradamus' less optimistic predictions, namely that a King of Terror will come to stalk the Earth and really muck things up. A pair of characters are at your disposal to divert this inconvenience, one an agile and street-smart policewoman, the other an experienced (if

lumbering) veteran. It's a little unclear as to what this game's angle will be, but it appears Eidos reckons it has the 3D Action Adventure bull firmly by the horns.

OMIKRON: THE NOMAD SOUL
RELEASED: Winter



▲ Omikron and Soul Reaver – dizygotic twins? Perhaps.

In a similar vein, Omikron is a moody 3D Action Adventure-type affair that promises to 'transcend the narrow confines of traditional gaming genres' with its plot and gameplay. The game begins when the player-character's soul is transported into the body of an unwitting inhabitant of another universe with no explanation as to why or how. He (or she?) must explore a full-scale city replete with a wandering population (that can be communicated with in realtime via synched facial movements) and cross-town traffic, a feature that Eidos slightly spuriously claims is a videogame first. Intriguingly, though, if your character dies their soul is transferred into the body of the first individual that touches them, an idea also seen in the perpetually delayed *Messiah* (see Interplay). This 'Virtual Reincarnation' means you must adapt to a new body and its various characteristics, plus there will be no easy saved game solution to being killed. Again this is an ambitious game that's trying to push the gameplay envelope, which considering the amount of time it has been in development, is not without good cause.

PSYGNOSIS

ROLLCAGE EXTREME
RELEASED: Spring 2000

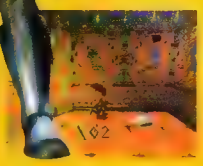
Rollcage added a quirky edge to the racing genre by featuring cars that were indestructable and could drive anywhere. Rollcage Extreme will take the original ideas and improve them further to create an even more involving title. The game will feature six new environments with 20 tracks and a league system which promises greater longevity. There are also some all-new weapons and destroying scenery in particular areas can hinder the progress of your competitors. A number of multiplayer options also feature: including a demolition mode, a stunt mode and the intriguing rubble soccer game..

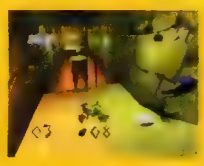
LEGGIT
RELEASED: Winter 2000

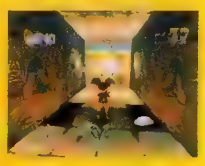
If the high octane action of *Rollcage Extreme* is too much for you, then perhaps you would prefer a cute little game with bright colours and charming characters? Well Leggit has the colours, but the action can become pretty fierce. The aim of the game is to wander around collecting different coloured crates which when smashed open will reveal either more buddies to join your troop of commandos, vehicles to help you get around the island, or weapons to help in your pursuit of mass destruction. So, not only must you collect crates for yourself, you also need to hinder the enemies' attempts to do the same. The main characters are strange, quirkily coloured guys who look a bit like jelly beans with legs, and any of these can take control of the squadron. With 64 missions and many extra touches, including animals who steal your boxes, Leggit should prove an original addition to the market.

TRICKS 'N' TREASURES
RELEASED: Spring 2000

Space, the final frontier – full of planets with bizarre names and wierder inhabitants. Here we find ourselves on the amusingly named planet Dorc, where all the leaders have been killed by invading aliens. They are now searching for a leader, who will be chosen by finding the greatest explorer in thier world. Pieces of the sacred crown of Dorc have been scattered around the planet and whoever collects them all will be crowned. Throughout six different environments, one can use weapons, traps or spells to take victory. The game also promises to be exciting in multiplayer mode with the opportunity to have four people battling against each other in quad screen action.







INFOGRAMES

EAGLE ONE HARRIER ATTACK
RELEASE: Autumn

An electromagnetic device has been enabled over Hawaii, meaning that all forms of communication have been severed. The US President sends your team of marines to regain control of Hawaii and get everything back online. You must liberate the towns, rescue the people and steal super planes for ultra combat. The game can be played in variuos modes, from inside the cockpit, or from third-person or first-person viewpoints. The player has complete freedom of movement and may complete the mission in any way possible. Also, a two player mode can offer head-to-head dogfights or co-operative split-screen link up to finish the missions. Oh, and if you win in an impressive fashion, use the instant replay to bask in your glory.

ACCLAIM

ARMORINES: PROJECT S.W.A.R.M
RELEASED: Winter

Someone at Acclaim must like their comics, 'cos after *Shadow Man* comes Armorines, a title based around the heavy-calibre strip of the same name. It will take the form of a first-person game starring a squad of elite marines sent to wipe out a swarm of marauding insectoid aliens, and not star anybody called Hudson and Hicks probably. The conflict will take place across arctic wastes, dense South American jungles, scorching deserts and an inevitable foray into the alien hive with co-operative multiplayer modes available for that tense teamwork feel. Yeah, but will it be a stand-up fight, or just another bug hunt?

WWF ATTITUDE
RELEASED: June

A follow-up to the best wrestling game available on any format was an inevitability, especially considering the massive commercial success that the first WWF game achieved. The market for titles based around oiled sweaty men is a veritable cash cow, with the younger generation especially lapping them up, and WWF Attitude has a head start over the slew of similarly themed games popping up in the near future. This game will take the smart graphics and tasty gameplay of the original and add features such as an improved Create a Wrestler option (which is utterly hilarious), a Custom Event mode (where you can design your own arena and evening's entertainment) and a line up of non-standard bouts such as First Blood, Iron Man, Steel Cage featuring the surely illegal weapons. This is bound to be a success even without the wealth of new options available.

R/C RE-VOLT
RELEASED: Autumn

Radio control could well be the next vogue style in games, what with our cover game and this knobbly-tyred racer on its way. You'll get to whizz about at ankle level in high-torque battery-driven cars through a number of locations, such as a prehistoric museum, a cruise ship, supermarkets and so forth, over a range of treacherous surfaces like marble, glass and freshly washed floors. Whether it will be a genuine distant control point game or more likely employ a third-person viewing angle remains to be seen, but for diddy car racing in a subtly distended *Micro Machines* style this could be one to watch.

JEREMY MCGRATH MOTOCROSS 2000
AVAILABLE: September

The less than impressive dirt biking game from last year makes a comeback, although the presence of *Dirt* (nka *Ricky Carmichael*, see Monitor from page 100) will hopefully buck its ideas up a bit. All the usual graphical tweaks and technical augmentations promised in this kind of update should be present and correct, while the mildly entertaining track editor makes a welcome return. Fully authentic sponsor billboards and rider uniforms will be included (wow) and a stunt competition lets you show off your groin-endangering mid-air moves. The competition for best two-wheeled racer could be under way.

CAPCOM

THE MISADVENTURES OF TRON BOONE
RELEASED: Autumn

Companies are constantly coming up wih new ways to continue old franchises whilst keeping everything fresh and exciting. Capcom have produced many *Megaman* titles over the years and so now, to inject life into the old dog, they have produced a spin-off game featuring the female rival from *Megaman Legends*, Tron Boone. Feisty young Tron circles the world in her airship looking for treasure and priceless artifacts. She is accompanied by the Servbots, creatures that she created herself to help her in her quest, using mind control to issue her orders. The story tells of how she was corrrupted by evil while still keeping the light hearted edge of the series. It incorporates action elements with puzzle and RPG sections and features 3D polygon characters.

MINDSCAPE

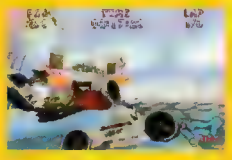
CHESSMASTER II
RELEASED: Autumn

Before the age of the grey box, there was the arcade game. Before that people read books, wore odd clothes and played chess, ah, those were civilised times, for sure. Now re-live the magical halcyon days with the release of Chessmaster II, all the fun of chess without losing the queen down the back of the sofa. Choose between various chess sets and play with 64 chess personalities and 30 different grandmasters. All skills are catered for, with a comprehensive teaching mode built in and with classical music playing in the background this is a respectable alternative to gore-filled mayhem.

INTERPLAY/VIRGIN

WILD WATER WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS
RELEASED: Autumn

This seems to be a kind of *Diddy Kong Racing* on jet skis, pigeonhole fans, with cartoonish millionaire characters burning rudder over many watery and flotsam-filled levels doing the familiar powerup-collecting, speed-boosting shuffle. It's still early days on this one so we can't honestly elaborate any further. Sorry.



MESSIAH
RELEASED: Winter

The hands-down winner of the Most Slipped Game Award must go to this avant-garde bit of software that has been slowed up by the recent pact made between Shiny's parent company Interplay and the rejuvenated Virgin. Its polygon-smoothing realtime tessalation techniques have actually been patented, and promise the most realistic-looking human figures yet, with smoothly deforming skin and ruffling clothing. The lead character is also unusual, being a diminutive cherub with wings named Bob who can posses the bodies of those he encounters throughout the baroque industro-futuristic cityscape the game takes place in. It's almost inconceivable that after so much delay it will be anything less than superb, particularly when bearing in mind Shiny's reputation for attention to detail. However many of the innovations that were set to make Messiah stand out are likely to have been assimilated (or God forbid surpassed) by other games in the meantime. We shall see...

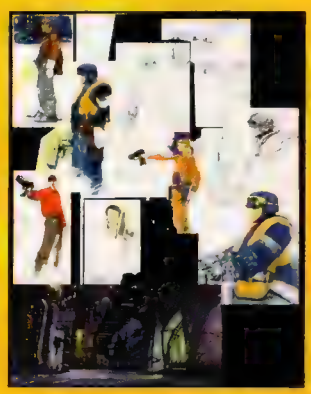
EARTHWORM JIM 3D
RELEASED: Winter

The erstwhile annelid has received a blow to the head that has left him imprisoned inside his own consciousness in a world of self-made fantasy. Sounds like fun to me, but in this further slice of the segmented hero's adventures you must help Jim piece together his cerebral cortex so as to catapult himself out of this nightmare Gestalt entity. All of his phobias, desires and hang-ups will make this tricky however, along with his delusions of meeting old enemies such as the Disco Zombies and Professor Monkey-for-a-Head. This is the dirt-eating star's first foray into the third dimension, spread across four big 'ol worlds split into thirty levels, littered with stuff like baked bean lava flows, warring bands of cows and chickens and suchlike. It's a good premise, I'm sure you'll agree and will provide plenty of potential for daft humorousness and situations so bizarre they may break some kind of sensible by-laws.

TAKE TWO

GRAND THEFT AUTO 2
RELEASED: 22nd October

Sadly no screens for this inevitable money-spinner but the general consensus around the RockStar stand was that this is a big step up from the successful but decidedly lo-tech original. Set in a five-minutes-into-the-future American city, the game structure is no longer based around linear mission-solving, but instead sees you as a thug for hire amongst an underworld ruled by four rival gangs (Mafia, Triads etc.). Attacking a member of one of these gangs puts you in the favour of the other three, who then give you tasks to accomplish for cash. At times you'll see others in the same position as you committing carjackings and other felonies, while the grottier alleyways of the metropolis are bristling with muggers, so the safe streets of before now become a tougher place, even for hardened crims like yourself. The environment will be far more interactive as well, with rooftops and fire escapes now open to exploration while the population behave with greater intelligence than before. For example, you can take over a taxi and drive around the city, picking up passengers and even making money through taking fares, or nab a bus, fill it with willing tourists and then blow it up! Other neat touches include radio station channels which fade and crackle the further away from the transmitter you roam and a tune which is wryly full of samples of actual MPs debating the moral ambiguities of the first GTA in Parliament. The game is virtually finished, so next issue we'll hopefully bring you a more detailed look at it, plus an exposé on RockStar games, easily the most ironic developers around at the moment.



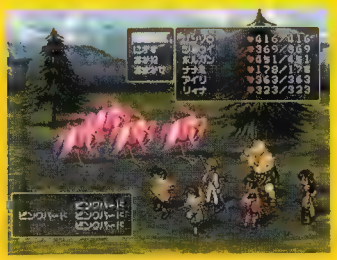
▲ These concept designs are close to being realised, so stick with STATION for more news.

▶ Only the Sisters Of Murphys can save this chap now, as things are about to start getting nasty.

KONAMI

SUIKODEN 2
RELEASED: Autumn

An epic RPG sequel featuring the tale of two young childhood friends who become mixed up in a war, during which one of them becomes leader of the resistance and the path of the other leads to betrayal. The game promises 40 hours of gameplay as well as involving tactical map battles featuring 108 different characters.



SOUL OF THE SAMURAI
RELEASED: Autumn

The year is 1781, a time when famine wreacks havoc and the world of politics is overflowing with corruption. The two main characters of the game, one male and one female, cannot help but become embroiled in the conspiracies surrounding them. The game incorporates elements of RPGs with the opportunity to talk to the various characters dotted about and find out information, but it also has action sequences, with various fighting techniques and weapons to destroy opposition samurai and creatures.

KONAMI ARCAGE CLASSICS
RELEASED: Autumn

With the modern interest in retro arcade titles, Konami goes one better and releases a ten game compilation of some of its biggest hits from yesteryear. All time classic *Scramble* is the pick of the bunch, along with the excellent early platform arcader *Shao Lins Road* and original beat 'em-up favourite *Yie Ar Kung Fu*. These are backed up with *Road Fighter, Roc 'n Rope, Super Cobra, Time Pilot, Pooyan, Gyrus* and the bizarrely monickered *Circus Charlie*.

KONAMI SPORTS SERIES
RELEASED: Winter

Konami continues its various sports franchises, starting with *Major League Soccer 2000* which is the next title in the *ISS* series and promises 50 different MLS teams, 10 authentic stadiums and realistic lighting and playing conditions.

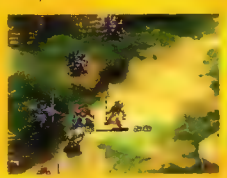
NBA In The Zone 2000 features all 29 official teams from the National Basketball Association, over 300 players all with their signature moves and motion captured graphics. Special moves include the behind-the-back dribble, no-look passing and the ability to fake shots. You can also play the entire season as well as trading your players.

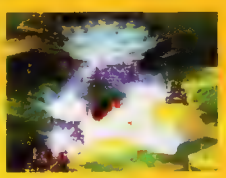
NHL Blades Of Steel 2000 includes motion captured animation as well as texture mapped faces to truly represent the players of the National Hockey League. Fully detailed arenas also have realistic ice conditions and the commentary is by NHL announcer Randy Hahn. It features all the statistics that you would expect as well as the ability to select free agents to improve your team.

Konami Rally puts you behind the wheel of licensed vehicles as you battle around multiple tracks, each with different driving and weather conditions. With all the official rules in place, all you have to guide you is your navigator as you hurtle round various stages of high octane excitement.

VANDAL HEARTS 2
RELEASED: Winter

Another RPG sequel, this time set in a medieval world of mystical magic and brave knights. Featuring turn based strategy, it somewhat pompously promises 'human drama and the struggle of desire and honour', whatever that may entail. Fighting train spotters are more than catered for with the inclusion of 120 different weapons and the combat scenes also feature special attacks and spell animations.





THQ

SHAO LIN
RELEASED: September

It's been hibernating for quite a while, but this four player simultaneous martial arts extravaganza is finally on its way. In the manner of *Thrill Kill* it will be possible to take on three other mates at once in an authentic Chinese setting with the help of six different martial arts styles. A pseudo-RPG quest mode will add an elenment of storytelling to the fracas, a quest that will at times pitch up to eight CPU controlled characters into battle against your solitary chap or chapess. With the help of a multi-tap and some pals it's bound to be a jape, although the inevitable *Tekken 3* comparisons will hound it 'til it bleeds.

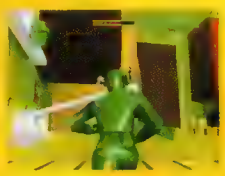
3DO

ARMY MEN: AIR ATTACK
RELEASED: Autumn

Remember the excellent scenes in Disney's *Toy Story* where the little plastic soldiers were dispatched into the world on a dangerous mission? Well, the same premise is incorporated in this title only writ large. Focusing on a war between the good guys (the green men) and the evil tan army, a whole series of campaigns will be included involving the air cavalry in daring sky combat through the synthetic world of plastic forests and mountains and the even more treacherous real world scenarios of sandcastles and ice-cream stands. Battles will involve radar installations, submarines and airfields along with a number of vehicles and power-ups all with a tongue in cheek edge, such as the camp ground which features lethal giant flaming marshmallows.

ARMY MEN: SARGE'S HEROES
RELEASED: Autumn

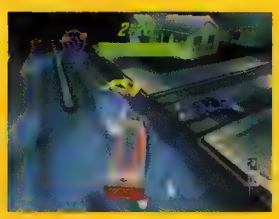
In case one title about plastic people blowing each other to smithereens is not enough for you, 3DO will also be releasing this arcade game based around Sarge, the hero of the green army. The action takes place in a house, with skirmishes on countertops, in hallways and even the perilous backyard. The evil tan soldiers have many weapons at their disposal with which to destroy you, from the obvious, such as explosive sky rockets, to the more bizarre magnifying glasses (watch those good soldiers melt) and, when battle spills over into the kitchen area, the devastating garbage disposal unit. Unique features of the game include the fact that in his plastic world the sarge is depicted as life-size whereas in the realworld he is a mere two inches tall and also the pioneering use of 'Plastosheen', which promises unique highlighting effects.

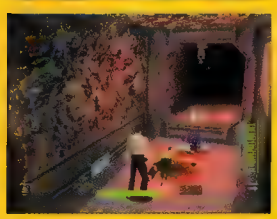


HIGH HEAT BASEBALL 2000
RELEASED: Summer

Here in Blighty, hungry sports fans just cannot get enough of football games and every week seems to bring another title. In America, it is baseball that captures the imagination and so 3DO unleash another simulation this summer. High Heat features all of the 1999 MLBPA players and complete career statistics. All the players are motion captured and the commentary is by Giants announcer Ted Robinson. For the serious fan it features nine different pitching types, 37 stadiums and also the opportunity to trade players and recruit talent from the minor leagues. For the uninitiated, there will be a family mode, meaning an easy to understand interface allowing you to literally pick up and play.

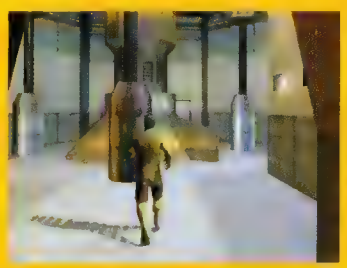
FOX INTERACTIVE





DIE HARD TRILOGY 2
RELEASED: Winter

Yippie-ki-yay, muddy funster! (Or so the censorious puritans would have us believe.) Maverick cop John McClane has finally returned in the sequel to arguably one of the finest, and certainly one of the most eclectic, PlayStation games around (*Die Hard Trilogy*, in case too much *Home and Away* has eroded your mental capacities). Gambling mecca Las Vegas provides the locale for the combustibles, where McClane stumbles upon a terrorist – as is his particular talent (other than the one facial expression in his films; surprised frog). As in the previous game, Die Hard Trilogy 2 boasts three differing game engines, integrated into two distinct styles of play: movie and arcade. Guide him through first-person shooting, third-person gunplay and manic driving as he strives to keep Las Vegas on the map. Although, who'd really miss it, apart from Elvis? As the screenshots testify, this looks to re-ignite the PlayStation world with truly disparate gameplay. But no clean vest for McClane, so it seems.



PLANET OF THE APES
RELEASED: Early 2000

Imagine a world populated by hirsute apes, a kingdom of the simian. Whilst this may sound like parts of rural Devon, it is, in fact, the focus for this intriguing PlayStation title. Ulysses, sole human survivor and symbolic glance at classical mythology, crash lands a spaceship on an uncharted planet 1,000 years into the future. Ulysses soon discovers that evolution has taken a mordant twist, and intelligent apes now hold dominion leaving humans at the bottom of the food chain. Using a unique realtime cinematic style camera, players will explore 15 immense levels with a total of more than 70 distinct sub-levels. Ulysses also encounters puzzles en route and has stealth capabilities at his disposal to dupe apes and sneak past their vigil. The game world is further realised via the possibility to interact with denizens of the game-environ. A blend of weapon based and hand-to-hand combat, graphical splendour and close relation to the movies ensure that this game will be gibbon all the attention it deserves.

NOTE: SCREENSHOTS FROM PC WORK IN PROGRESS VERSION.

NHL CHAMPIONSHIP 2000
RELEASED: Autumn

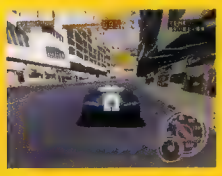
Apparently the most anticipated hockey title of the 1999-2000 season, if you are credulous enough to believe the double-speak of the press release. Claiming 'stunning 3D', the game should have movement more fluid than a pensioner after a dose of liver salts and play sublimely. Those amongst you who thrive on statistics and are too wary to play RPGs will revel in the detailed and authentic player information. As is the vogue in reputable sports titles, NHL Championship contains commentary by Kenny Albert and John Davidson, whoever the hell they are; not Des Lynam for sure. Get bored of your current players? Why not edit them to your own twisted desires, or swap them on the hockey equivalent of the white slave trade. The passive, sloth-ridden couch-coach is also catered for, with a wealth of management options available.

ACCOLADE

After being symbiotically bonded to EA for God knows how many years Accolade have been bought by the unfeasibly deep pocketed Infogrames, who as a result have nabbed some of the behemoth publisher's most long standing 'brands'. Bet there was plenty gnashing of teeth at Langley that afternoon...

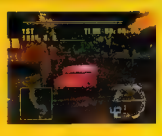
TEST DRIVE 6
RELEASED: Autumn

It's been around since the days of the Amiga 500 and been superseded by just about every racing game that has come out recently, but the *Test Drive* series just won't quit and make a bee line for the scrapper's yard. The usual improvements in graphics, AI and driving model are promised, while new racing environments such as café-strewn Paris streets, narrow Hong Kong alleyways and alligator-infested Louisiana swampland can have rubber burned over them. Gimmicks include police helicopters tracking your speeding car and multiple simultaneous cop chases occurring on the same stretch of road, while a familiar array of Yank muscle cars and rumbling TVRs can be taken and driven away at your leisure.



DEMOLITION RACER
RELEASED: Autumn

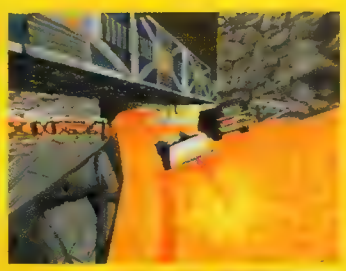
Accolade have snagged some of the core members of the *Destruction Derby* team (presumably not those working on *Driver*) and set them to create this, a similarly-themed effort all of their own. Demolition Racer will take the panel-beating to new levels though, with new fender-bending formats such as all-in bowl matches, stock car racing, last man standing, and suicide racing. The suitably belligerent soundtrack will feature a mix of clued-up thrash metal and hardcore techno from the likes of Fear Factory and Prodigy labelmates Empirion.



TEST DRIVE OFF-ROAD 3
RELEASED: Autumn

In a similar vein, here's another episode in the frankly indifferent off-road racing series that'll come equipped with the virtually mandatory brand spanking new driving model and graphics engine, letting you trample all over the countryside in a number of chunky-tyred jalopies including Jeeps, the ever reliable HumVee and the Dodge T-Rex, which comes fitted with optional rows of teeth, presumably. Whether it just turns out to be a down-the-line racer with a bumpier road (again) is the real danger, of course.

ELECTRONIC ARTS



HOT WHEELS
RELEASED: Winter

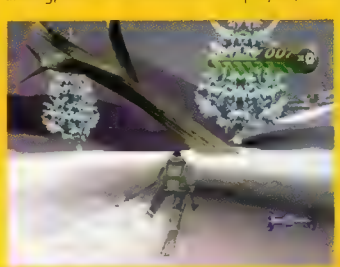
Remember Hot Wheels? Diminutive cars that you could 'race' by hurtling across the floor, gumming up the car axle with all manner of detritus from the floor, including cat hair, crumbs and perturbing amorphous 'gak'. Well, EA believes that you should make a capital outlay for the privilege of this racing experience and nostalgia immersion for the hackneyed and weary. The game offers 40 Hot Wheels motahs, including such esteemed models as the Mongoose and Twin Mill, raced over four fantastic environments including Volcano Island and Haunted Highway. Not only is the ethic pure racing, but the potential for cunning stunts is also bounteous as tracks are littered with Evil Knievel-tastic loops and ramps to diminish even the most hardy of efforts on *Eddie Kidd's Jump Challenge* on the Spectrum. Perhaps not quite the *Mario Kart* vanquisher the PlayStation needs, but a real curio nonetheless.

MEDAL OF HONOUR
RELEASED: October

Travel back in time to 1944 and take on the role of a young pilot shot down, who now becomes a field agent taking part in dangerous operations, commando raids and search and rescue missions. Historical accuracy is promised in the formulating of the tasks and the forboding atmosphere should be interesting.

TOMORROW NEVER DIES
RELEASE: Summer

Hi, I'm Sean Connery and I'm here to tell you about this shhplendid new Bond game. Shhomwhat belated it may well be, but thishh third-pershon shhooter may do for Bond what *Die Hard Trilogy* did for Willish. The plot takesh elements and shcnearios from the film and intergatesh them seamlesshly into an all-new game shtructure. Take Bond on 14 misshions with shuch diversh locationsh ash military outpostsh, shki lodgesh and a shtealth boat. Eshpecially cool are the gadgetsh you can employ in the missionsh, such as exploding cufflinksh and shki pole rocket launchersh. Similar to *Die Hard Trilogy* the game featuresh three seperate shtyles of play, tird-pershon, shkiing and driving, with two charactersh to play as, Bond and Wai Lun, the token bit of fluff.

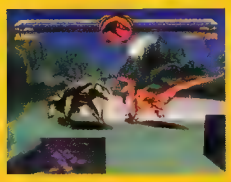


▲ At last, Bond comes to the PlayStation – whatever next, Star Wars?

WARPATH: JURASSIC PARK
RELEASED: Winter

Those with a salacious memory for dismal software failures will certainly recall the abhorrent *Rise Of The Robots*, and probably *Primal Rage*, a fighting game with limited moves involving jerky, semi-epileptic dinosaurs. It bombed like the Luftwaffe.

Warpath: Jurassic Park is another dinosaur scrapper, a Darwinist struggle for supremacy with a successful and profitable licence. Handy. The game offers 14 seething carnivorous reptiles, as well as several species seemingly new to science, such as the mega raptor and the Gigantosaurus. Warpath promises to be a technical combat game, with combos, reversals, grabs and slams. The prospect of the spectacle of a T-Rex pulling off a ten hit combo confounds the imagination. Should energy levels begin to ebb during a fight, why not simply devour some of the foolish and expendable humans jaunting around the arena. I can almost hear those merchandise dollars rolling in now. Another limo, Mr Spielberg?



FIFA 2000
RELEASED: Winter

Its position at the top of the Christmas Chart may as well be reserved with a little white card, regardless of how much the game has actually changed since its last incarnation. It promises to include over 40 classic teams, allowing the player to challenge the greatest teams of all time as well as today's champs. Basically, expect last year's title with a few new bells and whistles.

NASCAR 2000
RELEASED: October

I don't have enough car games Mr Developer, please send me some more. NASCAR 2000 includes 18 real tracks as well as a number of fantasy courses. Play as your fave real driver or make your own. If you have any friends, then drag one in for the two player season mode. A more bizarre PR revelation promises that it will feature 'all new paint jobs', wow, that sold us.

KNOCK OUT KINGS 2000
RELEASED: November

In the immortal words of PJ and Duncan, let's get ready to rumble. You wanna fight as a ten stone weakling called Mr Wimpy? Not a problem, for there is included a create a fighter mode. Alternatively there are 50 classic fighters built in, giving you the chance to relive your favourite battles in great fights mode. For more arcadey kids, there is a quick start mode, where you can just go in and try to take your opponent out. Whether it includes a chomping ears mode is unknown, but we can hope.

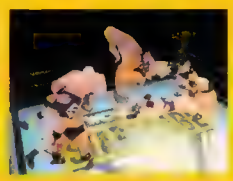
ABOVE: Theme music by Steppenwolf, we presume.

ROAD RASH 2000
RELEASED: Autumn

Road Rash was a phenomenal title, allowing you to vent some anti-authoritarian angst by slugging unwary bike-cops with chains or crowbars. Violence and asphalt-ballet was the real credo of *Road Rash*, with the racing almost a technicality; brutality was the issue, big hurt the aim. The basic premise of the game is to race, finish first and customise your bike into an über-mechanism of velocity and ferocity. The affrays have been improved by the inclusion of combo attacks and 'super' punches, taking out rival bikers and leaving them in a twisted maze of metal. Another fresh idea is the option to play as one of the much maligned cops and bust some perp ass, as they say. Graphically, Road Rash 2000 looks to be a tasty option, with four race regions and well rendered bikes. And it'll make a refreshing change from all the bloody car games.

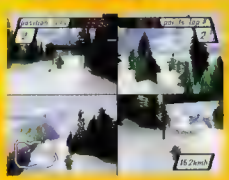
WCW MAYHEM
RELEASED: October

A wrestling title that promises more than a few middle aged men rushing about in their pants. Brimming with options, budding Hogans or Stings can play as their heroes or create their own behemoth. As well as fighting for the championship belt, you also get the chance to appear on the televised Pay Per Views and, just as in the real thing, action can now leave the squared circle and continue in the locker room or the garage. Proper entrance music, pyrotechnics and chants abound. Worth piledriving your Dad for, wrestling fans.



XENA: WARRIOR PRINCESS
RELEASED: October

There is no better company on a Saturday night than Lucy Lawless and a couple of cans. Now you can recreate this any day of the week with this action adventure title on the PlayStation. It promises puzzle action as well as cool fighting, hopefully with cheesy actors and barely dressed ladies. Seven worlds, 21 sub-levels and a heroine who makes Lara Croft look like Thora Hird. Bring it on.



SLED STORM
RELEASED: TBA

Software companies continue to astound with constant toil and their striving to proffer unique titles to the gaming masses. Who would ever imagine that EA would release another racing game? Fans of the film *Die Hard 2* will recall the reckless snow-sled chase, a theme continued in Sled Storm, a snowmobile racer, capitalising on the vogue for extreme sport titles. Sled Storm combines elements of *Cool Boarders* in its quiver of skills, with over 50 tricks and combinations to elevate you or make you crash ingloriously. As Bruce Forsyth almost said, trick points make sled upgrades, with nifty moves leading to an epic sled. Fourteen courses allow for real terrain experiences, with hidden routes and variable terrain, as well as the expected hidden characters, the carrot afore the donkey. Sled Storm also contains a four player mode, all on a single screen, ideal for party play or pretending.

E3: satisfies the trouser snake as well as the mind...

NO. 1: THE EIDOS DUO (AS SHOWN ABOVE)
Ebony and Ivory of the PlayStation world, close enough to feel each other's heat. Maybe the right individual could double his pleasure with this succulent pair. Turned Dazza and Christian into a couple of salivating wretches.

NO. 2: ENIGMATIC PISTON GIRL
'Motorcycle plentiness' as Manics-rapt Kendall chimed in. Astride a thrumming cycle she pouted her salutations and barely remained inside her svelte leather two-piece. If only we had a small Bond-like watch-magnet to lower those zips. Might aggravate the silicone, however.

NO. 3: THE STACKED MUNCHKINS
Seemingly stuffing the Jaffa cakes they guard into their already swelling tops. As they sauntered around the phalanx of E3, curiously their headgear was the only floppy and flaccid thing in their vicinity. Quite a curio. 'Worth a squirt' as eloquent Dazza would claim.

NO 4: HELLOOO, NURSE!
Nick's belle of the show, although not for the medicinal virtue of the uniform. It's the radiant smile that captivates. No, really... Beaming her way through E3, she handed out prophylactics with a lascivious air. She could sell nuclear weapons to a Quaker colony.

NO. 5: NEO-DAISY DUKE
Perched lithely upon the General Lee of *Dukes Of Hazzard* repute and clad in gear as dark as her eyes, her pistol waving attracted many a gaze. Promotions using such enticing women is not advised, however, as punters react violently to having firearms reared in their faces.

The 'Also Rans'

Those neglected in favour of a bigger bra size and a lower IQ.

THE MINOR LEAGUE HAREM
Lacking that Eastern sparkle, and delivering precious little promise by being overly attired, this voluptuous vixen is destined to a life of servitude under the yoke of C-list celebrities, such as Freddie Starr or the irritating referee twat from *Big Break*.

THE RING-LOVERS
A tragic example of fashion *faux pas* in the swimwear stakes. The yellow, clinging costumes resembled a jaundiced tan-line and would probably become immediately transparent when exposed to water. Which is a saving grace. Watch out for these foxes in an impending copy of *Razzle*.

Woofer
ENOUGH TO MAKE EVEN
Resembling your alcoholic aunt
attempting to recapture her lost youth,
this specimen was enough to make all
who witnessed her consider attending
probably disintegrates entire
portions of the ozone layer and emits
from a Kleenex box, turn the other
cheek lest she offer you hers.

Lara - Version 1.4
One of the primum mobile of the show was the appearance of
Lara Weller, the new face of Lara Croft at least for the next
weeks with changes being made more often than in the
Russian cabinet. As usual, Weller looked as authentic as the
genuine article, clad in a rib crushingly snug rubber top and
shorts on the verge of becoming a chafing irritant. And how
she handled those firearms.

Next Month

WORLD EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW!

GRAN TURISMO 2

We'll be proud to bring you the first genuine in-game pictures seen anywhere, plus other all-new screenshots of what may be the PlayStation 1's finest hour before its inevitable swansong.

EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW!

CRASH TEAM RACING

The baron of tangerine marsupials is back again, and this time he's out to nab Mario's wheels! We go for a spin in what's bound to be the arcade racer of the year, with a grid full of reprobates from the Bandicoot's platform adventures out for glory in super-zippy carts.

NO. 1 WITH A BULLIT!

DRIVER

At last the hi-octane car chase masterpiece will pull up with a screech of tyres, ready for review and a quick getaway. It's been hailed by some as 'Grand Theft Auto done good', and we can't wait to get behind the wheel of a throbbing Yankee V8 muscle car and break some traffic laws while whistling the theme to Starsky and Hutch.

THE VIEW FROM AFAR

SHADOW MAN ART PRINTS

There'll be a dark feast for the eyeballs as we'll be giving away one of four high-quality glossy prints of exclusive Shadow Man artwork. Gaze upon them if you dare...

PUKKA PLAYABLES!

JESUS' OWN DEMO DISC

If the son of Our Lord had survived that dark day on Golgotha it would only be because he foresaw the unmissibility of our coverdisc, packed as it is with hellishly tempting playables and blasphemously exciting rolling demos.

GET THE PICTURE?

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Enter our exclusive comp courtesy of Titus and win a widescreen TV and crystal clear DVD player worth a total of over £1000!

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE:

Fear Factor
Resident Evil: Nemesis
WWF Attitude
Formula 1 '99
Jurassic Park: Warpath
Demolition Racer

Due to circumstances undoubtedly beyond our control, all magazine contents are subject to change. Sorry about the uncertainty, but it's inevitable. Just ask Heisenberg.

ISSUE 11 ON SALE 29TH JULY 1999

STATION: A LOUDMOUTH, RENEGADE GOOD-FOR-NOTHING – BUT IT'S ALSO THE BEST UNOFFICIAL PSX MONTHLY IN THE UK.

Nice little schoolgirl, my ass!

EVIL ZONE

"Explodes into action like Manga on steroids"

"Intense as Hell"
STATION MAGAZINE
93%

"It kicks arse"
PLAYSTATION PRO
93%

Don't let the pleated skirt fool you. Lea is evil and it's your task to conquer her. Select one of nine characters and fight the others until the final battle.

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B-Movie • Dead Ball Zone

ISSUE THREE
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Tomb Raider III • Actua Soccer 3
Actua Golf 3 • Actua Tennis
Virtual Lara

ISSUE FOUR
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Brian Lara Cricket (rolling)

ISSUE FIVE
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S.C.A.R.S • Shadow Gunner

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Legacy of Kain: Soul Reaver (rolling)

ISSUE SEVEN
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Vigilante 8• Diver's Dream (rolling)

ISSUE EIGHT
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UEFA Champions League
Gex: Deep Cover Gecko • Eliminator
Retro Force • Tomb Raider II (PLAT.)
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MSH Vs Street Fighter (rolling)
Megaman X4 (rolling) • Megaman
Legends (rolling) • R-Types (rolling)

ISSUE NINE
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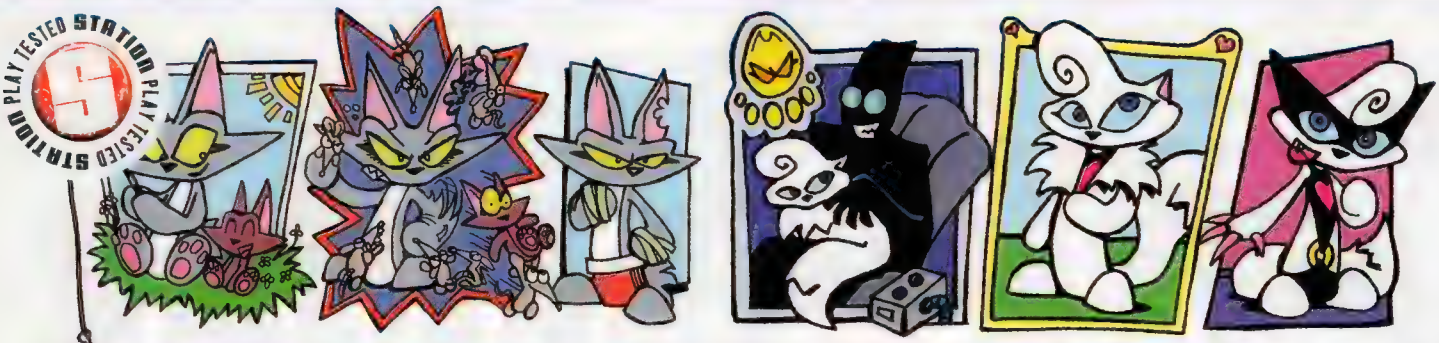


RAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

RAT ATTACK

PUBLISHER: Mindscape
DEVELOPER: Pure
RELEASE DATE: September
GAME TYPE: Arcade Action
PAL Percentage Complete: 80%

EARLY VERDICT

RAT ATTACK: For
Like an old school arcade classic, easy to pick up and play and instantly addictive.

RAT ATTACK: Against
Does not exactly use up all of the power of the PlayStation with its simplistic ideas.

Anticipation Rating: 75%
It will be good to have a basic and fun game to play after the brain taxing aspects of recent titles.

ABOVE: Later levels become incredibly hectic with hundreds of nasty little vermin.

"...ONCE THE RATS START DUPLICATING, YOU WILL FIND YOURSELF OVERRUN AND HEADING FOR MADNESS."

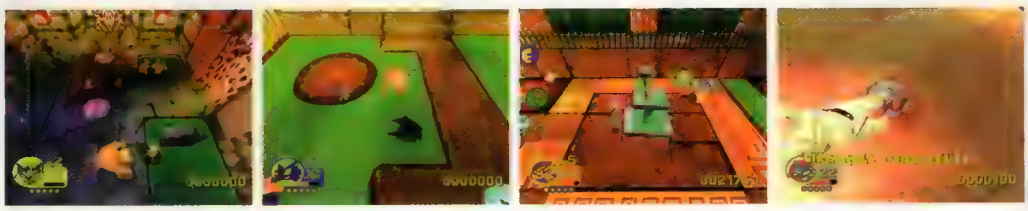
Hey, you crazy cats, get ready to guard the world against an invasion of rats from outer space.

LEFT TO RIGHT: Scenery that Andy Warhol would be proud of; a high camera position gives the player a large LOS.

The Scratch Cats is an organisation run by wily feline Professor Julius, and when one of the members, Pearl, is taken captive, it is up to the rest of the company to save the day. Your enemies are space rats Washington and Jefferson who plan to take over the world with their army of creatures, who are infesting various locations and systematically destroying them. These rats also have duplicators to produce more of the pesky critters and a mutator which will turn a normal rat into anything from a brainy psycho to an Egyptian mummy. Luckily, Professor Julius can counter this with his new invention, the Eraticator, with which you can pick up the rats and then place them in the Destructor, getting them out of your hair forever.

From the earlier screens it promises to be fairly straight forward, with only a handful of rats to contend with, but as you work your way into the game, there are a lot more. Once they start to duplicate, you will find yourself overrun and heading for madness.

Various locations include the house, garden, haunted house, museum and art gallery, all with various dangers to overcome such as security lasers, transporters and Bennett, a rather unfriendly looking hound. End of level bosses range from the sweet, such as Yippy Yappy, a dog who you just have to tire out, to the grotesque King Scarab, a giant beetle. The simplicity of the idea promises to make it easy to get into but difficult to put down and the cartoon qualities suggest it will appeal to gamesplayers of all ages. Get ready for some serious rodent action.

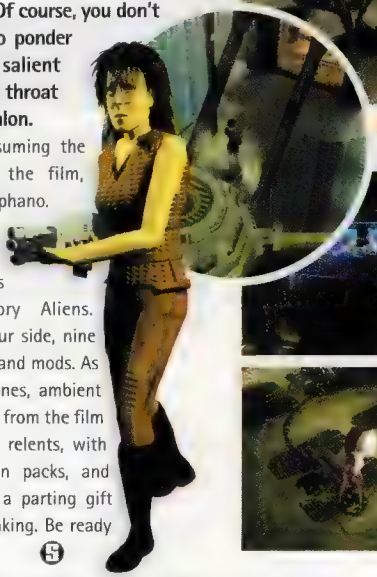


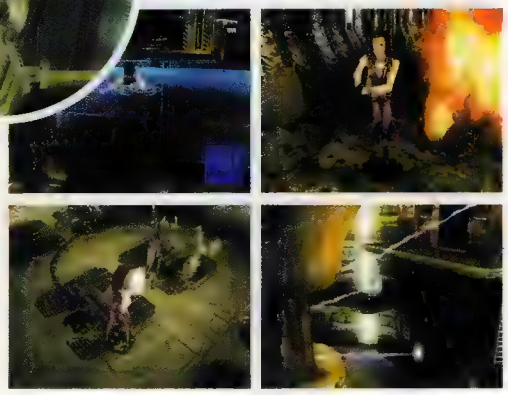
GAME OVER, MAN!

Possibly the best thing to erupt since John Hurt's chest...

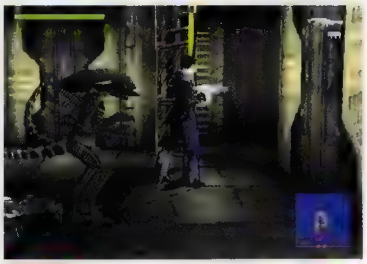
They're coming outta the goddam walls'. The frenzied and undulating wail of the Colonial Marine succinctly encapsulates the fear of the Alien. They are antinomian, evolved for slaughter and genocide. They don't drink tea or play chess and they never have the decency to lower the toilet seat. Of course, you don't get time to ponder these salient points as your throat is ruptured by a flailing talon.

Alien Resurrection sees you assuming the role of several characters from the film, including Ripley, Christie and DiStephano. The aesthetic of the game is gloom; more gloom than a wet Sunday at MFI, with lucifugous corridors concealing salivating, anticipatory Aliens. However, you have weaponry on your side, nine varieties, in fact, all with power-ups and mods. As you quest to destroy the Ripley clones, ambient features such as sounds and dialogue from the film become apparent. The action rarely relents, with onslaughts from Aliens, lone or in packs, and facehuggers intent on leaving you a parting gift that will, quite literally, be heartbreaking. Be ready to live the fear.





ABOVE: Character modelling looks superb, and you should see them thar Aliens move.



ABOVE: The 'behind you' pantomime trick failed to arouse his attention. Fatally.

ALIEN RESURRECTION

PUBLISHER: Fox Interactive
DEVELOPER: Argonaut
RELEASE DATE: Winter
GAME TYPE: 3D Xenomorph Action
PAL Percentage Complete: 60%

EARLY VERDICT

ALIEN RESURRECTION: For

Aliens so realistic you can almost feel their drool and the tortured heat of their frenzied breath. Fanatics of the films and their ambience will not be disappointed.

ALIEN RESURRECTION: Against

How can you nit-pick a game that features the opprobrious Aliens? The only potential flaw is something of a grating similarity to a game called *Tomb Raider*. You may have heard of it.

TANKS FOR EVERYTHING

TANKTIX

PUBLISHER: Gremlin
DEVELOPER: In-House
RELEASE DATE: 10th September
GAME TYPE: Strategy
PAL Percentage Complete: 50%

EARLY VERDICT

TANKTIX: For

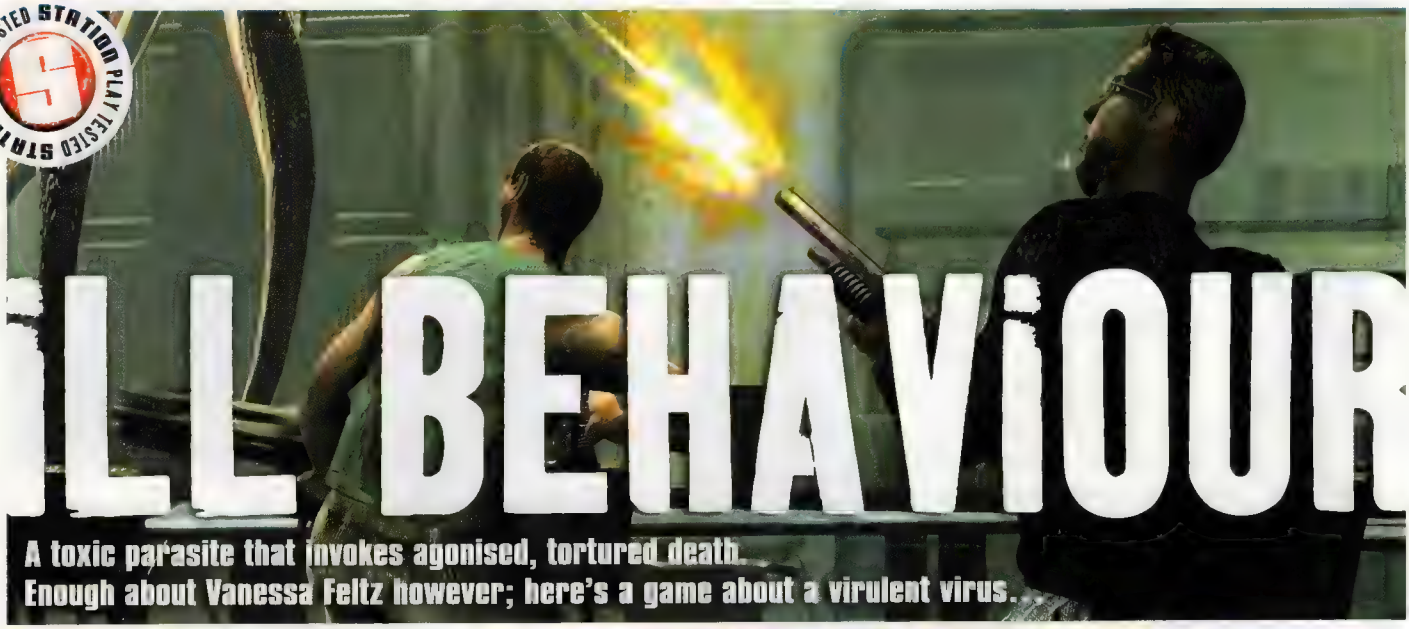
A *Command & Conquer* for kids is a novel concept, that's for sure.

TANKTIX: Against

It may be difficult to get the balance between accessibility for youngsters and broad spectrum demopgraphic appeal.

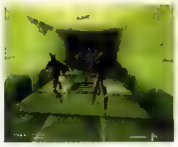
Construction and destruction in equal measures now from the soon to be retired Gremlin label.

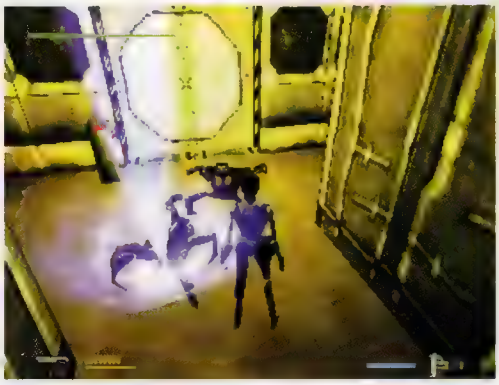
A strategy game aimed predominantly at youngsters is an unusual thing, although Gremlin plans to provide plenty of entertainment for those of a more mature persuasion as well (much in the manner of Spyro?). The action revolves around the player using an anti-gravity crane to gather material resources to create the various constituent parts of tanks, such as tracks, engine blocks and so on. All familiar ground so far, but the twist is that tanks can be made out of whatever substance comes to hand – be it stone, wood, traditional metal or futuristic alloys. Dozens of differing combinations of components can be created, depending on whether you desire a lumbering but impregnable fortress or some nippy scout tanks capable of speedy thieving missions. A welcome link-up option will let you take on a canny human player on equal terms.

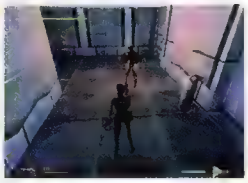


ILL BEHAVIOUR

A toxic parasite that invokes agonised, tortured death. Enough about Vanessa Feltz however; here's a game about a virulent virus...







ABOVE: When Joan's gaze was averted, the sidekick took a chance to surreptitiously scratch his arse.

VIRUS

PUBLISHER: Cryo

DEVELOPER: In-House

RELEASE DATE: July

GAME TYPE: 3D Action Adventure

PAL Percentage Complete: 70%

EARLY VERDICT

VIRUS: For

Erm... well, it coincides concisely with the forthcoming film on which the game is based, which should guarantee some sales if the film is warmly received.

VIRUS: Against

The credo about film tie-ins looks to remain unchanged after Virus, and it may quickly be consigned to the pile of *Tomb Raider* clones.

Anticipation Rating: 15%

Frankly, the anticipation of being stoned to death with solidified dog faeces is higher than that of playing Virus.

"...THE TENSION INVOKED BY THE SQUALID AND GLOOMY CORRIDORS IS QUITE PALPABLE."

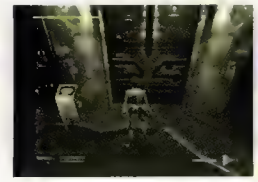
Joan Averill, the protagonist of this particular game, is having something of an unpleasant day. Working on a gruesome homicide case, in which pictures of victims show dismembered bodies with extremities replaced by metallic objects, things are about to descend to an even worse level. Hearing a ruckus from the corridor, she dashes out into the corridor to investigate. So it begins. Virus, the game and the film, is based on the tenebrous Dark Horse comic, with the film starring Jamie Lee Curtis and Donald Sutherland (weathered PC buffs may recall an antecedent Cyro game, Conspiracy, also starring Donald Sutherland: 'You've earned your vodka so far, Maks!')

Necrotizing Fasciitis

In theory, Virus boasts some eyebrow-raising credentials; 40 breeds of monstrosity, nine levels, nine weapons and five patriarch bosses. Graphically, though, at this stage the game resembles a second generation PlayStation release, more *Tomb Raider* than *Gran Turismo*. And while *Tomb Raider* offered total immersion in fantastic, mythical environments, Virus seems only to allow you to scamper around corridors, flicking the occasional switch, yet the tension invoked by the squalid and gloomy corridors is quite palpable.

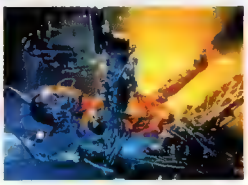
Frustrating, however, is the lack of versatility in the central character: there's no look or jump command, and the danger is that exploration will become lacklustre and linear. The collective voice of the modern gamer cries for immersion, for an environment so believable they can transfer themselves into it as an escape from the norms of reality – there is a terrible fear that Virus will not come up to scratch in this department.

Things may improve with Virus, though, and a new engine or graphical transmogrification may prove beneficial. We wait, here at STATION, to cast a verdict, and of course, extra points will be scored for the use of Jamie Lee.



REEL 2 REEL

As these pictures seem to prove, the film should prove far more entertaining than the game. Especially if you take a girl and do the 'popcorn trick'.

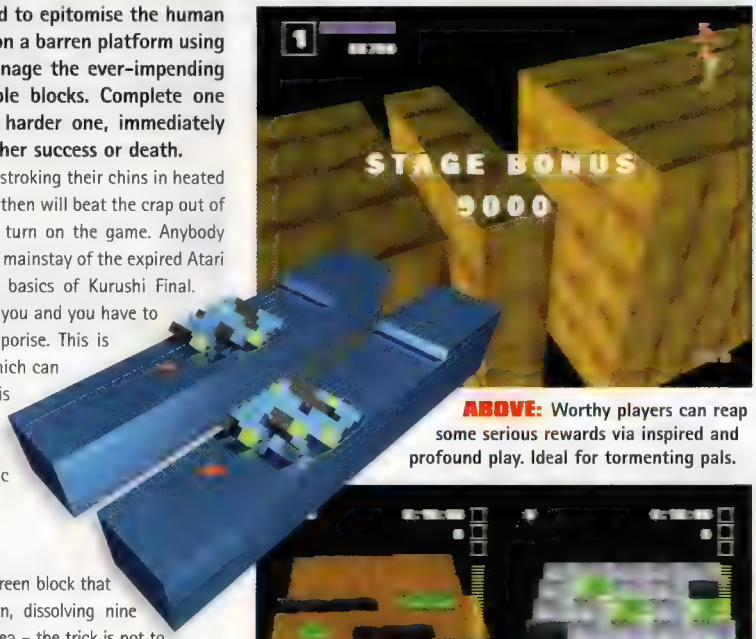


A ROLLING STONE GATHERS IQ

One man, a levitating platform and inexorably advancing blocks; bad trip or leftfield puzzler?

Kurushi Final can be said to epitomise the human condition; a lone soul on a barren platform using his innate skills to manage the ever-impending crisis of insurmountable blocks. Complete one problem and another, harder one, immediately replaces it. The only exit is either success or death.

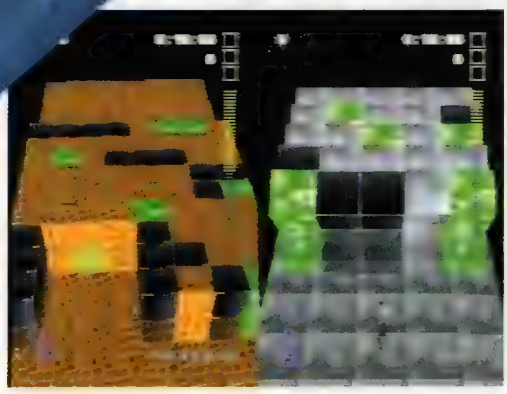
Solipsistic philosophers will be stroking their chins in heated agreement at this proposition, and then will beat the crap out of each other for rights to the next turn on the game. Anybody familiar with the aged classic *Klax*, mainstay of the expired Atari Lynx, should be *au fait* with the basics of Kurushi Final. Essentially, blocks trundle towards you and you have to make all the non-black blocks vaporise. This is done by activating floor panels, which can then be 'detonated' when a block is over it. As you only have a set number of turns before ensuing disaster, lateral thought and frantic pace are needed.



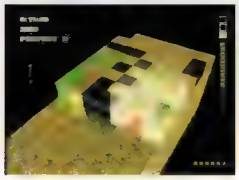
ABOVE: Worthy players can reap some serious rewards via inspired and profound play. Ideal for tormenting pals.

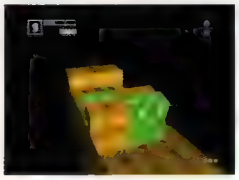
Mensa Or Densa?

Helping matters along is a special green block that acts to instigate a chain explosion, dissolving nine blocks simultaneously in a square area – the trick is not to take out any black blocks in this reaction. Although it may sound like an impossible task, the learning curve is well implemented, ascending from the elementary to the Stephen Hawkings, and Kurushi Final offers several modes of play, including two player japes and a survival mode. There are also the obligatory secret characters, giving you the option to play as a caveman or a polar bear. Why not Ironside or the inbred looking one from *The Waltons*? Somewhat disturbingly, the game also calculates your IQ from your performance, so make sure, if you do badly, that friends/your girlfriend is not present. Benchpress your IQ...



ABOVE: Humiliate your friends and sneer derisively at their IQ in two player mode.





KURUSHI FINAL

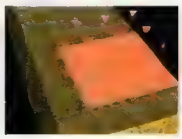
PUBLISHER: Sony
DEVELOPER: Sugar & Rockets
RELEASE DATE: July
GAME TYPE: Tetris/Klax Puzzle
PAL Percentage Complete: 70%

EARLY VERDICT

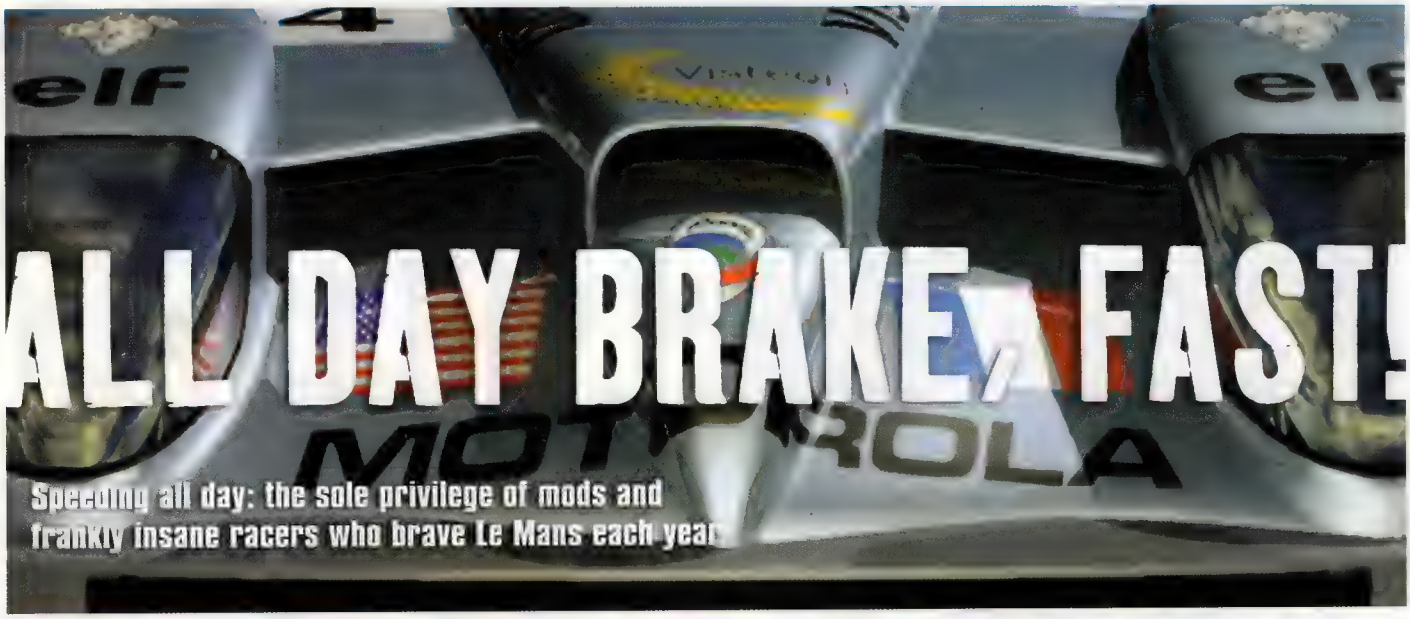
KURUSHI FINAL: For
Innovative, zappy and borderline surreal. Will pack enough challenge to amuse even those freaks who devoted hours to the Rubik's Cube

KURUSHI FINAL: Against
Essentially a doppelgänger of *Kurushi* with marginal extras. Simplistic visuals and spartan sounds may deter the lovers of superfice and glitz.

Anticipation Rating: 65%
Those who enjoyed the original *Kurushi* or those looking for originality will raise a covetous eyebrow. The braindead and civil servants will do well to stick with *Street Fighter Zero Turbo Zen Pavlova Edition 3.*



"AS YOU ONLY HAVE A SET NUMBER OF TURNS BEFORE ENSUING DISASTER, LATERAL THOUGHT AND FRANTIC PACE ARE NEEDED"



ALL DAY BRAKE, FAST!

Speeding all day: the sole privilege of mods and frankly insane racers who brave Le Mans each year

LE MANS 24 HOURS

PUBLISHER: Infogrames
DEVELOPER: Eutechnyx
RELEASE DATE: Autumn
GAME TYPE: Racing
PAL Percentage Complete: 80%

EARLY VERDICT

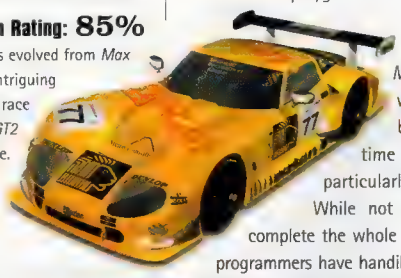
LE MANS 24 HOURS: For
Strong and proven graphics engine, night racing, unusual cars.

LE MANS 24 HOURS: Against
Not as mainstream as *F1*, stiff competition.

Anticipation Rating: 85%
With the smart visuals evolved from *Max Power Racing* and an intriguing number of different race options, Le Mans will give *GT2* a run for its money for sure.

After our in-depth history in issue 6 we thought you'd want an update on how this stamina-sapping racer is shaping up, and by all accounts the Geordie boys at Eutechnyx have a potential winner on their hands.

As you can see from these new shots, the visual presentation is top notch, with convincing rubber smoke and flying dirt particle effects complementing the painstakingly constructed polygonal cars admirably. We are assured that there will be no nasty pop-up to spoil the illusion, which on the evidence of *Max Power Racing* is no vain boast, while the blazing headlights that become necessary during the night-time portions of the race look superb, particularly in replay mode.



While not many of you will be bothered to complete the whole 24 hour stint of a complete race, the programmers have handily included an accelerated time option which means that even during a shortened race the sun will rise and night will eventually fall, giving you a truncated impression of the whole shebang in a more easily-digestible nugget.

ABOVE: Losing it on the straight is embarrassing, and potentially an easy way to write off your flash racing car.

Another welcome tweaking of reality comes in the form of the cars that make up the 16 vehicle strong grid, with a mix and match policy adopted that sees vehicles from the last three years competing in a unified field, increasing the variety and choice presented and letting you pick the fire-breathing tarmac gobbler that suits your taste best. What with the comprehensive management elements and reputedly super-intelligent AI, we'll be keeping a close eye on Le Mans 24hr, as will Sony I expect. Wouldn't want some Brit upstart stealing all of *GT2*'s glory now, would we?

> "...THE PROGRAMMERS HAVE HANDILY INCLUDED AN ACCELERATED TIME OPTION WHICH MEANS DURING A SHORTENED RACE THE SUN WILL RISE AND NIGHT WILL EVENTUALLY FALL..."

LEFT TO RIGHT: Brake discs glow red hot when applied hard, as you would expect; the close-up detail on the coachwork is impressive, with even the cheapest sponsor decals represented and readable. Talk about value for money.

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: The high detail and smooth character movement of Thrill Kill look set to make a re-appearance; 'Mef sticks it to the RZA. And he don't eat green eggs and ham.

GOT MORE YIN THAN YANG

Several of their number are being held on suspicion of murder. Prepare for more controversy as Wu-Tang go Shaolin style.

WU-TANG CLAN SHAOLIN STYLE

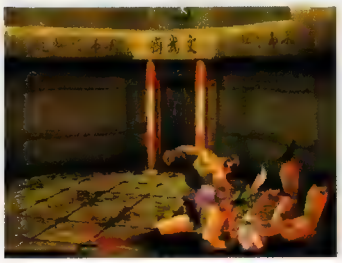
PUBLISHER: Activision
DEVELOPER: Paradox
RELEASE DATE: Autumn
GAME TYPE: Beat 'em-up
PAL Percentage Complete: 75%

EARLY VERDICT

WU-TANG SHAOLIN STYLE: For
The gorgeous graphics engine will itself be worth the asking price, but with the charismatic Clan providing creative input too this should be a must-have title.

WU-TANG SHAOLIN STYLE: Against
Given that *Thrill Kill* was dropped because of its image, who knows whether we shall ever see this.

As reported last issue, the dons of horrorcore hip-hop, The Wu-Tang Clan, are to become digitally immortalised in a videogame based around their Shaolin-styled philosophy and predilection for badly dubbed kung-fu movies. Using the excellent graphics engine from sadly unreleased shock 'em-up *Thrill Kill*, the game sees nine key members of the lawyers' favourite group fighting it out with one another in a variety of mythical warrior guises. Up to four players can scrap simultaneously on screen and battle through the mysterious 36 chambers (a number intrinsic to their ideology) to discover new fighting moves and subsequent enlightenment. Exclusive and previously unheard new tunes will also accompany the game – as long as various Clan members can stay out of the clutches of the law long enough to get the tracks laid down, that is. This, needless to say, is one of the cooler releases on the cards for this autumn, and STATION is dying to interview Method, Dirty, Ghostface et al to discover what their opinion is on *Chocobo Racing*.



NIBLICK ON A DOG-LEG HOLE

What, you may well ask, is a 'niblick'? Or, for that matter, a 'dog-leg hole'? Ask your uncle in the plus-fours, or check out the PGA.

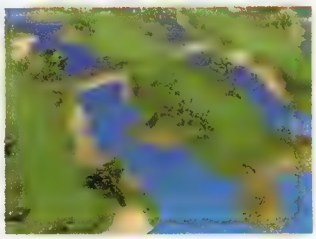
EUROPEAN PGA GOLF

PUBLISHER: Gremlin
DEVELOPER: In-House
RELEASE DATE: Winter
GAME TYPE: Golf Sim
PAL Percentage Complete: 80%

EARLY VERDICT

EUROPEAN PGA GOLF: For
Ultra-realism is promised, and the introduction of professional commentators should lend this an air of gravitas lacking in other titles.

EUROPEAN PGA GOLF: Against
Just how innovative can a golf simulation actually be? There's plenty to chose from already and a tree is a tree is a tree, no matter how well drawn.



The merits of computer golf are gentle and specific, and we at STATION will always have a place in our hearts for an idyllic afternoon's one-fingered play around a leafy simulation of St Andrews or wherever. Gremlin assures us that this latest round of ball stroking will have a much more conscientious attitude towards its graphics than the frankly shoddy golf games that have been around recently, and will also boast the gently sarcastic dulcet tones of commentating titan Peter Alliss backed up by his crony Alex Hay. A fine spread of different gaming options can see you go on tour in both the present day and also tee off against the old masters your mum probably likes, while a dedicated driving range lets you practice swinging without going to disreputable parties.

ABOVE MAIN: Golf isn't as lonely a pursuit as these perspectives might suggest, although course designers and rule book writers might bear the apparent tranquillity in mind...

STATION PLAY TESTED

MOTORCYCLE FRIENDLINESS

CASTROL HONDA SUPERBIKE RACING

PUBLISHER: THQ

DEVELOPER: Interactive Ent.

RELEASE DATE: July

GAME TYPE: Racing

PAL Percentage Complete: 90%

EARLY VERDICT

CASTROL HONDA SUPERBIKE RACING: For

Perennially overlooked style of racing game, wicked wheelies, high number of fellow racers...

CASTROL HONDA SUPERBIKE RACING: Against

Slow speed handling, only one bike it seems.

Anticipation Rating: 75%

Like boxing, this sport has a dedicated fanbase who will snap the title up, although a convincing game is just as difficult to put together.

ABOVE: Although there is no attempt to incorporate the antics of Dirt, occasionally you may get your bike mucky.

"...THE KIND OF FLAT OUT, KNEE-DOWN, TARMAC BASED ACTION NOW SEEN ONLY ON SKY SPORTS..."

Just as Superbiking recovers from a spate of deaths and serious injury a much safer form of crotch rocketeering arrives.

It's a sad fact which is only being redressed very recently that two-wheeled action of any form has never been particularly well represented in PSX Land, partly due to the less mainstream nature of bikes in general but also thanks to the difficulty of accurately representing the body-movement of rider and steed. This latest attempt to correct the balance comes in the company of Dirt and No Fear and replaces the mud-chugging with the kind of flat out, knee-down, tarmac based action now seen only on Sky Sports, plus it comes loaded with a pair of heavyweight sponsors and a mix of real-life tracks and fantasy street circuits.

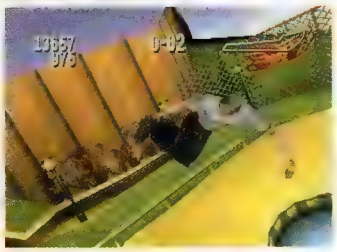
ABOVE: This poor chap is about to do an excellent Barry Sheene impression.

Your gaudily-leathered rider can try his luck against a whopping 23 other riders who can be hilariously knocked from their saddles if collided with hard enough, although serious knocks and riding too fast over rough trackside terrain can pitch your man off as well. An extremely usable and dynamic fairing view can be adopted which makes riding over bumps and pulling throttle-happy wheelies far more visually exciting than the standard exterior angles, while your bike can have its suspension and gearing tweaked according to the individual demands of the very different tracks. These include a sprint through a Greek village, Isle of Man TT-styled blasting along public roads and a power-hungry oval circuit where cornering speeds can easily exceed 170mph. The now mandatory split-screen option enables head-to-head duelling for budding Fogartys, and the equally necessary replay mode lets you watch those collar bone-smashing tumbles from a number of angles.

Whether the recurring bugbears of bike games (iffy slow-speed manoeuvring, a general lack of 'feel') can be vanquished remains to be seen, but lovers of helmet hair need only wait until July for an answer.

HAWK THE SHREDDER

Get your biggest trousers on but don't bother with any pads, 'cos they'll cramp your radical style.



ABOVE: Grabbing some big air over the poolside, this skater questions the fashion relevance of those big chunky keychains.

TONY HAWK'S

PUBLISHER: Activision
DEVELOPER: Neversoft Ent.
RELEASE DATE: Autumn
GAME TYPE: Skateboard Sim
PAL Percentage Complete: 75%

EARLY VERDICT

TONY HAWK: For

Although Street *Sk8ter* was OK it lacked style and technical finesse that this is promised to have in spades. And an endorsement of course.

TONY HAWK: Against

It's always hard to simulate the wobblings of the human body in this kind of game.

Scabby-kneed individuals of the world rejoice as the long drought of skateboarding games is finally over. Although *Street Sk8ter* (86% issue 7) was fun in an arcady manner, it lacked the marque of street-smart authenticity that this most fervent of urban subcultures values so highly. Step up Tony Hawk, skating's venerable elder statesman, to lend his name to this more seriously-pitched take on terrorising the local shopping arcade. Eight other top-flight board walkers have been drafted in to lend their likenesses and signature styles to the game, as well as adding their creative insight into its all-important control system and grading of stunt difficulty. A number of ideal environments form the canvas for deck-bound acrobatics, including a mall, freeway and primary school playground, all of which are littered with secret areas and hard to reach spots. An interesting-sounding career mode lets you take your skater from an unknown street kid through to seasoned professional earning an enviable amount of cash, while a split-screen option makes head-to-head dicing a possibility.

The man himself should be visiting these shores to promote thhe game very soon, so we can ask him about both this and about the state of his knee joints in person.

RAGE HARD, FIGHT HARDER

Throwback game styles and chop-socky aesthetics are to be brought into the present by a soon-to-be-extinct label.

LEFT: Hard-hitting pyrotechnics are bound to be high on the agenda.

GEDEKI

PUBLISHER: Gremlin
DEVELOPER: In-House
RELEASE DATE: Autumn
GAME TYPE: Beat 'em-up
PAL Percentage Complete: 70%

EARLY VERDICT

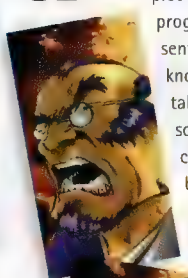
GEDEKI: For

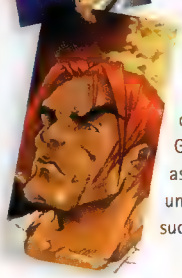
It harks back to Gremlin's golden age. Soon to consigned to memory as the northern developers become Infogrames Sheffield. The end of an era.

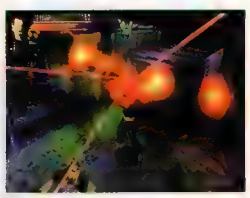
GEDEKI: Against

This game format may well be viewed dimly by those that have never loaded a game from a tape player. For us oldsters, however...

Harking back to one of Gremlin's first ever 8bit hits, Way of the Tiger, is this sideways-scrolling beat 'em-up, which literally translated means 'rage hard!', apparently. The plot concerns a cyberpunky virus hunting program that has somehow achieved sentience and mutated into a humanoid form known as the Pegasus Monster. You must take on the various homicidal minions it has somehow recruited and guide a team of combat trained hackers to take out this big brother of the Millennium Bug. The gameplay borrows from team fisticuff classics such as *Double Dragon* but adds a swathe of new nineties-style shticks such as multiple routes through levels, new martial arts moves that can be collected as powerups, flash co-operative moves and so forth. Hopefully Gedeki will avoid the normal traps associated with resurrecting unfashionable but proven game styles such as this.







ABOVE: Although this fighter's name is apparently Gobbo he doesn't look like a Geordie to me.

ACCELERATION POETRY

Pure adrenaline. Raw speed. Astounding acceleration. That's the STATION team going home at six o'clock. But what about Wip3out?

MIDDLE AND RIGHT: Notice the subtleties in the depth of lighting, although this particular level seems a touch dour and grey; replay mode lets you appreciate the care that has gone into the trackside scenery.

WipEout 2097 was the first ever game I ever owned for my PlayStation, so in some ways it's responsible for me being here, writing this preview and being a games journalist in general. For months it was the only disc I needed to own, leaving me captivated and exhilarated at the combination of mind-bending speed, sumptuous graphics that blurred by virtually unnoticed and muscular playability that kept everything tightly under control, being dastardly difficult but scrupulously fair. For some reason this truly seminal game was overlooked in the Great Sequelisation Rush of the late twentieth century and matured without any visible signs of ageing through Platinum-hood until now, when the beleaguered but subsequently rehabilitated Psygnosis will fall back on one of its high points and finally create a follow up.

Now, regular readers of STATION will be aware of how dimly the farcical *Formula 1 '98* is viewed round these here parts, and thus there was much furrowing of brows as we pictured a limp and lifeless sequel programmed by journeymen to continue a profitable 'franchise' (as hideous marketing-speak would have it). However the success of *Rollcage* has clarified how quality will always sell games, and it seems this has been taken to heart with W3, as it will have a long

WIP3OUT

PUBLISHER: Psygnosis
DEVELOPER: In-House
RELEASE DATE: Winter
GAME TYPE: Racing
PAL Percentage Complete: 75%

EARLY VERDICT

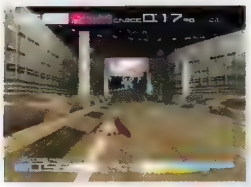
WIP3OUT: For
Hi-res mode at last, link cable compatible, what a starting point!

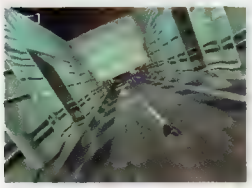
WIP3OUT: Against
Letting Sasha take over the soundtrack duties. Oh dear.

Anticipation Rating: 95%
Needless to say we're hungrier for this than Vanessa Feltz just before dinnertime.

SPLIT DECISION

While the split-screen option is obviously second best from a purist's point of view, with the assistance of a true widescreen option it could be bearable, making the four way racing mode a real attraction.





and considered development time combined with actually listening to the punters (and journo scum, hopefully).

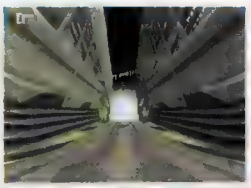
Velocity Messiah

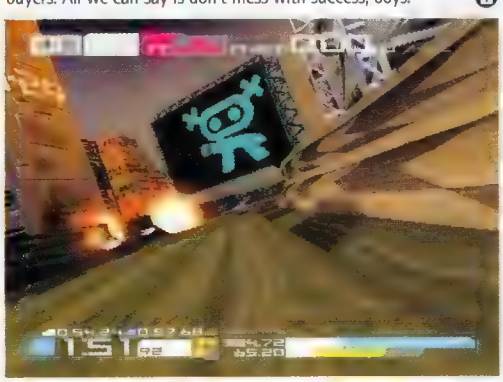
The latest low-down has revealed an exciting array of augmentations that will fill in the few blemishes and omissions left in *WO2097*. First amongst these, as you may have heard, is the use of hi-res mode throughout, which as you can see takes the already super-detailed polygons up a notch. Of course if the frame-rate suffers this will be all for nought, but in the intervening three years since the last game optimisation routines have been fine-tuned, so theoretically everything should look as velvety-smooth as before. More trendy reflection effects are set to enter the optical equation, while multi-coloured engine vapour trails will create a mélange of neon streaks in the ships' high-speed wake. All this loveliness will be all the more appreciated through the extremely welcome replay facility, a feature sorely lacking before, particularly when using the dedicated widescreen mode for those lucky enough to have a flash letterbox-proportioned telly.

"THE LATEST LOW-DOWN HAS REVEALED AN EXCITING ARRAY OF AUGMENTATIONS THAT WILL FILL IN THE FEW BLEMISHES AND OMISSIONS SEEN IN *WO2097*..."

A slew of new weapons on top of the well-loved favourites are to be included too, including a cloaking device, energy drainer and a pyrophoric trail, which presumably sets alight your jetwash – turning it into an undulating ribbon of fiery destruction. Three new ships have also been designed (some of which must be even faster than the beloved Pirhana-class craft) and of course there's the obligatory fresh brace of increasingly more tortuous circuits to painfully learn the correct racing line through. Hats off also to whoever wisely decided the unfashionable serial cable option should make a return, particularly as the poor man's link-up (the split screen option) makes a maiden *WipEout* appearance. Taking the lead from *TOCA 2* this of course allows for simultaneous four player action with two PSX's acting in tandem – quite a prospect, I'm sure you'll agree.

Topped off with the incremental joys of Analog control and the highly debatable addition of a Sasha-based soundtrack, it's basically a foregone conclusion that this will be a super-big title. Unless of course the already quite perfect handling physics are tinkered with to make the game more 'accessible' (ugh) to more mainstream buyers. All we can say is don't mess with success, boys.





VIVE LA REPUBLIQUE!

It just wouldn't be WipEout without the supremely distinctive graphics of The Designer's Republic on board to add a shiver of post-modernism to the front end and packaging. Long time visual consultants of veteran techno label and grebo chancers Pop Will Eat Itself, their trademark fractured font style, super deformed Japanese-tinged iconography and use of repetition is often imitated but never bettered.

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: As this close-up shows, the amount of detail is pretty staggering. If it moves as well we're in for a treat; the vital in-craft view gives the best angle on the proceedings, despite what some ill-informed fools might think; Neon vapour trails will increase the excitement and tension in close fought situations.

INDUSTRIAL UNREST

SABOTEUR

PUBLISHER: Eidos
DEVELOPER: Tigon Software
RELEASE DATE: October
GAME TYPE: 3D Action Adventure
PAL Percentage Complete: 60%

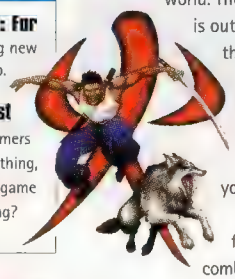
EARLY VERDICT

SABOTEUR: For
Having Fido in tow will be an interesting new twist on the sneak 'em-up.

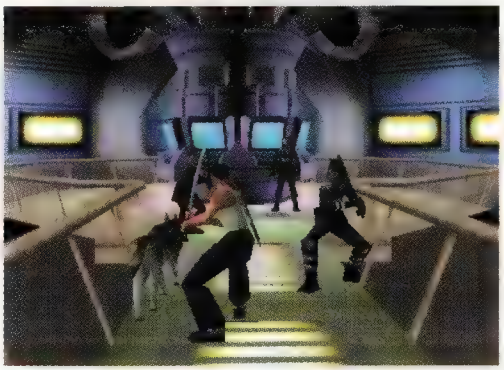
SABOTEUR: Against
It'll be interesting to see how the programmers get a cyber pooch to behave like the real thing, perhaps a Tamagotchi-type PocketStation game to take it through house training?

One man and his dog will take on a new and stealthier aspect this autumn – best leave the wax jacket at home and pack a carbine.

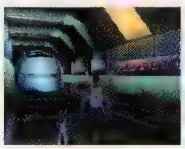
Eidos, not content with giving the PSX one of its major icons – the gun slinging Lara Croft – now plans to bring a new hero to the PlayStation with the release of the combat adventure game Saboteur. The villain of the piece is the nasty GENE corporation, based in Japan but with a name that instils fear throughout the world. The adventure begins while your character, Shin, is out on a fishing trip (so that's what heroes do in their spare time) as ruthless agents smash into your home and kidnap your helpless little sister Ami. The only member of your family there to protect her was your grandfather who died trying to protect her, so it is up to you to find Ami and crush the GENE empire.

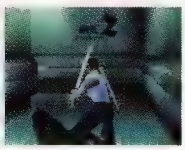


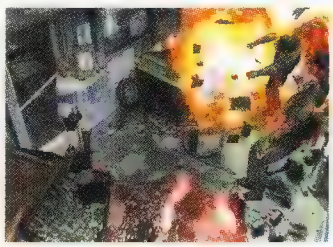
This is not merely an adventure game; it also features a 3D fighting system for realistic combat action. As well as the occasional scrap, you will be called upon to explore and solve a variety of brain teasing puzzles. An original feature is the involvement of a second character, namely Shiro, your trusty dog, who is useful for attacking enemies as well as being able to give assistance in difficult areas. He will also be able to warn in advance of impending trouble or hidden nastiness. Shin and Shiro will be gracing the PlayStation in October.

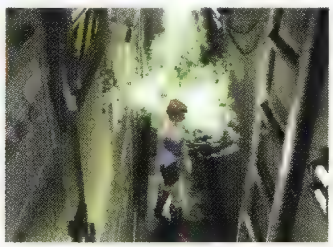


ABOVE: If your cover's blown the choice the will be high swing, low swing, or set the dog on 'em.







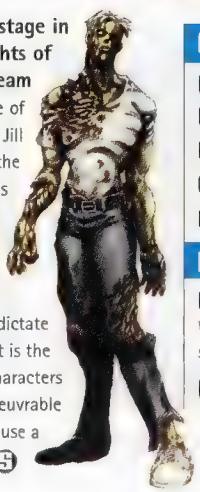


VALENTINE'S DAY MASSACRE

No use crying over spilt milk. Weep over spilt guts and entrails instead.

ABOVE: As the dog lit its fart, all hell (literally) broke loose.

We all fixate on game characters at some stage in our deluded lives. Some drool over thoughts of Cammy smeared in Castrol GTX, some dream of Lara dressed as a traffic warden. Those of you who grinned inanely at the thought of Jill Valentine doing anything can take succour with the forthcoming Resident Evil: Nemesis, for she is again the protagonist. In a retrograde plot step, events in Ressi 3 occur several hours before those in *Ressi 2*, most abstruse. Learning from the failings of the previous titles, Ressi 3 promises a non-linear plot, allowing the player's volition to dictate the action and progression. The focus of the plot is the search for a cure to Jill's illness, with several other characters also playable. Ten types of zombies and more manoeuvrable characters mean that Resident Evil: Nemesis should cause a bigger splash than drunken urination.



RESIDENT EVIL: NEMESIS

PUBLISHER: Virgin
DEVELOPER: Capcom
RELEASE DATE: Winter
GAME TYPE: Survival Horror
PAL Percentage Complete: 40%

EARLY VERDICT

RE: NEMESIS: For
Well, it's *Resident Evil* and therefore doomed to success. But promises a lot more besides a name.

RE: NEMESIS: Against
Will the gaming public have tired of this format? Probably not, we'd wager.

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G-Police
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Magic Gathering Battle Mage
Marvel Super Heroes
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Mech Warrior 2
Medievil
Metal Gear Solid
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Paradius
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Power Move Pro Wrestling
Poy Poy
Premier Manager '98
Psychic Force
Rage Racer
Rally Cross
Rapid Racer
Resco
Ray Storm
Ray Tracers
Rayman
Rebel Assault 2
Reboot
Re-Loader
Resident Evil 1, 2 & Direct Cut
Ridge Racer Type 4
Rise of the Robots 2 : Resurrection
Riven : The Sequel to Myst
Road Rash & 3D
Rockman X3
Rogue Trip
Rugrats
Samurai Showdown 3
Shellshock
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The Raiden Project
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Theme Park
Time Lines
Tiger Shark
Tiger Woods
Time Comando
Time Crisis
TOCA 1 & 2
Tokyo Highway Battle
Tombraider 1, 2 & 3
Tommi Makinen Rally
Top Gun
Total Drivin
Total Eclipse Turbo
Total NBA '97
Tunnel B1
Twin Bee
Twisted Metal 2 & 3
V - Rally
Victory Boxing
Vigilante 8
VR Baseball 97
VR Powerboat Racing
War Craft 2 : The Dark Saga
War Games
War Gods
War Hammer Dark Omen
Warhawk
WCW Nitro
WCW Thunder
WCW Vs the World
Wing Over
Wipeout & 2097
World Cup '98
World League Soccer '98
Worms
WWF in the House
WWF War Zone
WWF Wrestlemania
X-Com Terror from the Deep
X-Men Children of the Atom
Z
Zero Divide 2

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PLAYED AND RATED

[46] - APE ESCAPE [50] - SPEED FREAKS [52] - LEGACY OF KAIN: SOUL REAVER [56] - FA MANAGER [58] - EVIL ZONE
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[70] - KITCHEN PANIC [71] - SUIKAIGI [71] - N GAUGE TRAIN

WE CALL IT PITUITARY CRITICISM

Games reviewed in STATiON are graded on the time-honoured percentage point system some of you may be familiar with. Below is a breakdown of what it all corresponds to in the real world.

95-100%

If Jesus was a programmer, this would be the kind of game he would create to impress the disciples. Almost flawless, unarguably superb fun and as deeply absorbing as Kleenex.

90-94%

Virtually a classic but lacking that extra elusive *pièce de résistance* which will make it beloved by all. Kind of similar in outlook and aesthetic value to those new Biscuit Rolos.

80-89%

This enigmatic category is home to those titles that are undeniably good and true but may not be quite to everyone's taste, a bit like *Blade* starring Wesley Snipes, say...

70-79%

Traditionally known as the ice Hockey Game Zone, stuff falling into this parameter has at least one serious weak spot, or may be merely of too narrow a taste appeal to get a more respectable mark.

60-69%

Anything achieving this score will without doubt be a flawed piece of software, probably in several key areas. Definitely not worth buying, it should be regarded as one would view trainers made by Fila.

50-59%

Oh dear, we're now in the realms of take-it-back-to-the-shop type games. Knowingly cack, they must have been released by a publisher who cynically did not care about foisting garbage on you good people.

40-49%

We would guffaw at releases like this, but it's no laughing matter. Only a diseased combination of shoddy graphics, cruddy gameplay and utter unoriginality could earn a game this drubbing.

20-39%

Pooing in a disc drive would have arguably created a better piece of entertainment software. Only the most wretched scum and villainy would see fit to inflict something so brazenly awful on the rest of humanity.

0-19%

Something that was basically impossible to actually play to enters this score dungeon. There thankfully haven't been any yet in STATiON, but to dismiss the possibility as being too remote to occur would just play into Satan's hands.

TRUST THE TRIPLE A

As the data maelstrom that is pre-millennial life whips up into an ever-expanding vortex of conflicting opinion, disseminated information and the sudden loss of defining master narratives and moral templates, you the games-buying punter need an icon of quality you can trust. Enter the Triple A symbol, a beacon for all which is good and decent in the Valley of the PlayStation. Only the cream of the best of the elite get this mark of excellence, which acts as a cast-iron guarantee of a title's worthiness. There a tribe in South America which have adopted the Triple A as their totemic god, don'tcha know.

TALKING PAGES

Here is a quick guide to what to expect on the pages of STATiON's Played and Rated section:

- **INFO BOX**

PUBLISHER: Sony | DEVELOPER: Sony | RELEASE DATE: Summer | GAME TYPE: 3D Arcade Adventure
NO. OF PLAYERS: One | PRICE: £34.99 | COMPATIBILITY: Dual Shock Analog, Memory Card, Pocketstation

All you could possibly need to know at a glance about the title in question, technical speaking, that is. Who made it, what's it worth and can i play it with a friend?

PLAYED AND RATED INDEX

46 **APE ESCAPE**
Baboon Breakout? Gorilla Getaway? Simian Sortie? You decide.

50 **SPEED FREAKS**
Drug-fuelled orgy or *Mario Kart* clone. You decide.

52 **LEGACY OF KAIN: SOUL REAVER**
A flash of fangs, the final gasp, a succulent red gush flowing.

56 **FA MANAGER**
The beautiful game. Or is that boxing?

58 **EVIL ZONE**
Unimaginable power unleashed by pleated skirt wearing schoolgirls, amongst other things.

62 **AIRONAUTS**
If God had meant for us to fly, he'd have given us air miles.

64 **POINT BLANK 2**
Guns don't kill people, people with guns kill people.

66 **CROC 2**
A potential handbag navigates gentle hazards.

67 **BUGS BUNNY: LOST IN TIME**
Laconic carrot-masticator explores the epochs.

67 **C&C: RED ALERT [PLAT.]**
Oh what a lovely war!

IMPORT REVIEWS

68 **MAWATTE MUCHOI**
Isometric cousin of *Bomberman*,

69 **RASETSUN SWORD**
Bushido Blade cum RPG adventure.

69 **MAD PANIC COASTER**
Less fun than visiting Thorpe Park.

69 **EXCITING BASS**
Nothing to do with sexy opera singers.

70 **CYBER ORG**
Space bound confrontation.

70 **POCKET MUU MUU**
Vive la PocketStation!

70 **KITCHEN PANIC**
Where's the clingfilm? Oh God!

71 **SUIKAIGI**
Pompous fighting adventure.

71 **N GAUGE TRAIN**
As good as *Actua Paint Drying*.

TAKE A LOOK INSIDE

APE ESCAPE

Sadly not a game about animal liberationists releasing dozens of monkeys from an experimentation lab on an unsuspecting 'We eat British Beef with Confidence' public, but a chunky platformer with *Mario* overtones that cleverly makes full use of the twin analog sticks for the first time.

LEGACY OF KAIN: SOUL REAVER

The only game this month that could easily be the title for Iron Maiden's next concept album? Nonetheless this dark-hearted plunge into the depths of supernature has been brewing its lust blood for a suitably extended period of time, and the macabre result has been worth the delay. The hunger for fresh meat will itch in your veins...

FA MANAGER

We've seen other management sims in the past, some good, some not so good. None, however, have had the full endorsement of the FA, and so the bounds of realism have been limited by manufactured team names and close approximations. FA Manager looks to put all this right, offering not only the official sanction to use all teams from the leagues, but also unrivalled depth and gameplay.

• FIRST TEN MINUTES

FIRST TEN MINUTES
FIRST TEN MINUTES
09:59
Kaleidoscopic eye candy is impressive, although I catch no monkeys to begin with as the new two stick operation takes some practice.

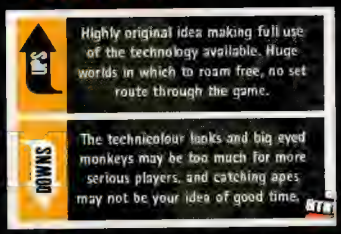
Do first impressions really count? Is it love at first sight or instant repulsion? Find out here.

• THE COMPETITION

COMPETITION
GEX: DEEP COVER GECKO
Reptilian platform antics with amusing soundbites and Baywatch bird
93%
A BUG'S LIFE
Disney cuteness overdose with Flik and his crazy buddies. Jumpy, jumpy!
67%

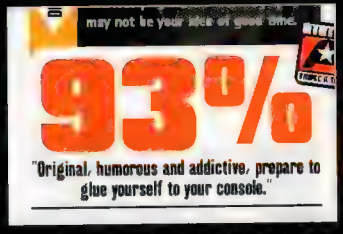
Life is full of choices. Whatever the review score, there may be an alternative to the game in question, and this is where you will find it.

• PLUS/MINUS


Highly original idea making full use of the technology available. Huge worlds in which to roam free, no set route through the game.
MINUS
The technicolour looks and big eyed monkeys may be too much for more serious players, and catching apes may not be your idea of good time.

Reasons why you should consider this game, reasons why you should be wary.

• SCOREBOX



This is what you're looking for. This is the country's most respected PlayStation magazine score: 100% unofficial, 100% unbiased, 100% honest!

STATION TRIPLE A TITLE

Ape Escape

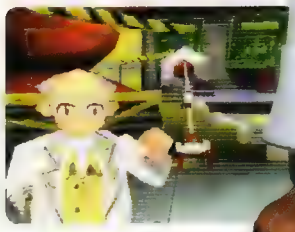
PUBLISHER: Sony | **DEVELOPER:** Sony | **RELEASE DATE:** Summer | **GAME TYPE:** 3D Arcade Adventure
NO. OF PLAYERS: One | **PRICE:** £39.99 | **COMPATIBILITY:** Dual Shock Analog, Memory Card, PocketStation

FIRST TEN MINUTES

Kaleidoscopic eye candy is impressive, although I catch no monkeys to begin with as the new two stick operation takes some practice.

HOW REWARDING

When you start the game you are armed only with a light stick and a net, but as you progress through the game you will receive other essential items. This is a sonic radar to help you track down hiding apes.

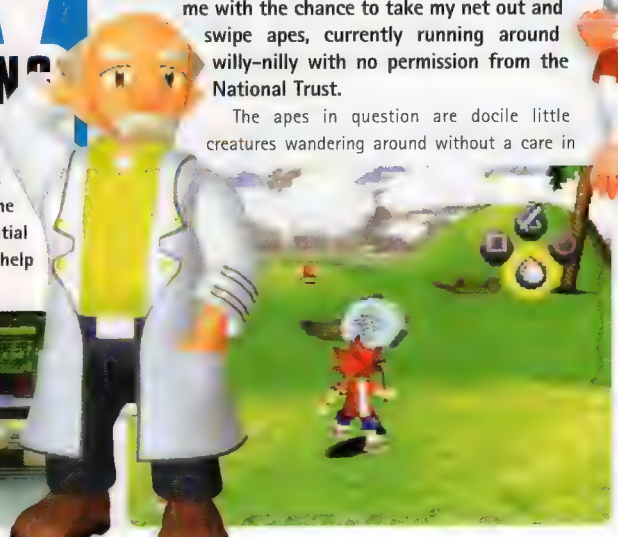


HEY! HEY! IT'S THE MONKEYS AND THEY ARE ENJOYING THEIR FREEDOM, NOW GRAB YOUR NET AND CATCH THE LITTLE BLIGHTERS.

LEFT TO RIGHT: Whack that hanging thing and an ape could fly out, so ready your net to catch him!; now you are in the big blue all you have to do is find the mischievous creature, I know he's around here somewhere.

When I am away from the STATION mansion, I enjoy nothing more than wondering around the countryside with a great big net searching for wild animals that I can capture. Normally it is no more exciting than the odd butterfly and I crave more exciting quarry. Thankfully, Sony has heard my prayer and provided me with the chance to take my net out and swipe apes, currently running around willy-nilly with no permission from the National Trust.

The apes in question are docile little creatures wandering around without a care in the world, until you get just a little too close to them, and then they go a tad loopy and run off quick smart. They also have beacons on their heads (don't ask) which glow yellow when they are calm, but if they throw a wobbly then the light turns to red.



Spank Your Monkey

Before each mission, a kooky looking professor pops up and gives you tips on playing and handy gadgets to make the mission easier (see boxout). Having been briefed, you will be told exactly how many of the rascals you have to catch to progress to the next stage. The initial level pretty much drops the apes in front of you, making the capture quite simple,

"For the first time, a game has been created exclusively for the twin stick Analog pad..."

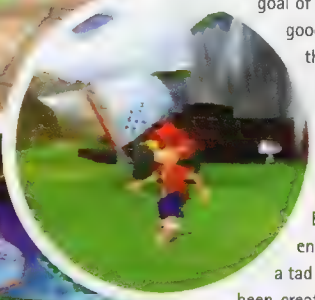
No.1 DID YOU KNOW...

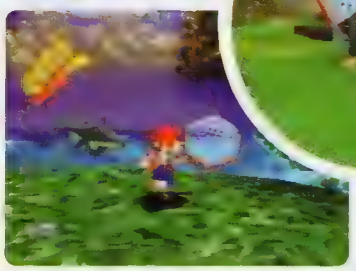
[illegible]

HEY, LOOK OUT!

A nice feature of the game is the ability of our hero to climb up tall trees and look at the surrounding area. This can be useful in locating apes who are far away and seeing what obstacles you must first overcome.

LEFT TO RIGHT: Unfortunately, you won't get through this door without first capturing a swimming ape; common sense would suggest leaving those eggs alone, but you may discover a sneaky ape underneath. Is it really worth it?

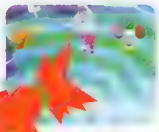


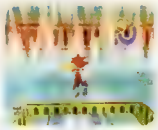


BELOW: Rapide's editorial staff are ready, now all they need is an infinite number of typewriters.

thus easing you into the game and enticing you further in, before it becomes more fiendish with screens which will have you pulling your hair out as you search for that final missing animal. Mail boxes are scattered around the levels, and these give you handy information and explain both the control methods and the goal of the mission. These are a very good idea because they mean that you don't have to wade through a five thousand page manual before you start your pixelated delights.

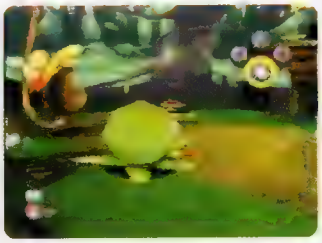
"You don't have to wade through a five thousand page manual before you can sample the delights..."



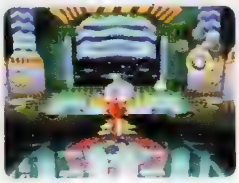


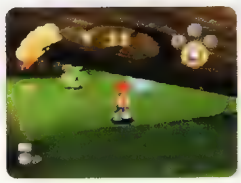
Control Your Destiny

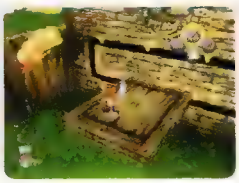
Another unique aspect of Ape Escape is the control system, which is entirely new and revolutionary, if initially a tad confusing. For the first time, a game has been created exclusively for the twin stick Analog pad and uses it to its full, so far untapped, potential. As has become standard, the left stick is used for directional control, but the usually dormant right stick now comes into its own for controlling various devices. In order to catch the apes in your net, simply swing the stick around and soon, if you are skilled enough, the ape will be trapped. The four symbol buttons are here merely used to select the device which you wish to use and unusually, the R1 button controls the jump and superjump options (press it twice for extra height). After playing for a while this new control method becomes natural and simple to use.



LEFT TO RIGHT: In terms of size and power, something in our hero is sadly lacking. My advice – run away, very fast.

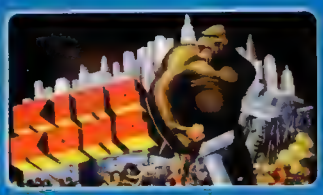






THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT

There have been many apes and monkeys in movies and games. Everyone knows of Donkey Kong and his cinematic inspiration King Kong, but don't forget Mighty Joe Young, Dr Zaeus, The Great Grape Ape and of course, Monkey.



Davy Jones and his mop topped chums were America's answer to The Beatles. Put together following the success of the fab four, initially their job was to look good whilst others wrote the songs and played the instruments. Later in their career they took over the reins and became a 'real' band. Check out their album and movie Head for some classic spaced out material.

Walk The Dinosaur

Ape Escape features a large section of varied environments, from basic early levels set in the country, to atmospheric rainy jungle levels and tougher terrains to traverse. The most impressive looking stage features dinosaurs: first off a pterodactyl who guards its eggs and will scoop you into the air for invading it's territory, and if you get past this Jurassic obstacle your next foe is a Tyrannosaurus Rex who, the mail box informs you, is invincible. Fine, you may think, simply run as far away from it as fast as you can, but this proves impossible as sitting on the tale of this extinct behemoth is another one of those blinkin' apes, without whom you cannot proceed to the next level.

It requires quick reflexes, as you first coax the beast to run towards you and then jump out of the way, crashing the creature's cranium into a wall. Do this enough times and the ape will fall off and lay dazed and confused on the ground until you scoop it up and advance.

Variety Is The Spice Of Life

I can hear you, doubting Thomas, thinking that there is nothing else to the game but running around catching apes, but you will be eating your words with a giant rusty spoon as you see the variety on offer in the later levels. Some screens involve underwater sequences: learn how to swim and you will discover secret caves and rooms, some of which contain items to collect and the occasional missing ape. Get used to the underwater aspects and the game throws you another curve ball, by putting the odd dangerous fish in the water. Luckily for you there's a handy dingy to aid you and again the Analog controller stands up and takes a bow with its innovative controls, use a single stick to turn the boat around and both sticks together to row, row, row your boat gently down the stream, uh, I mean evade being eaten by the nasty scaly beasties.

Ape Escape is as close as Sony have come to producing a *Mario 64* for the PlayStation. You can sit down to play for five minutes and end up losing hours as you search for that last elusive ape. Get further and the apes will become more intelligent, actually hiding to make your mission harder. Little touches like this is what makes Ape Escape special, time has been spent on the title and it oozes quality, from the excellent graphics to the feverish gameplay. This is the sort of game that totally immerses you in its world and will keep you hooked for months. What are you waiting for? **PEELED BY** KENDALL LACEY

"The initial level pretty much drops the apes in front of you, making the capture quite simple, further in you will pull your hair out as you search for that missing animal."

COMPETITION

GEX: DEEP COVER GECKO
Reptilian platform antics, with amusing soundbites and *Baywatch* bird.

93%

A BUG'S LIFE
Disney cuteness overdose with Flik and his crazy buddies. Jumpy, jumpy!

67%

STATION VERDICT

UPS
Highly original idea making full use of the technology available. Huge worlds in which to roam free, no set route through the game.

DOWNS
The technicolour looks and big eyed monkeys may be too much for more serious players, and catching apes may not be your idea of good time.

93%

"Original, humorous and addictive, prepare to glue yourself to your console."

No.1 DID YOU KNOW...

The voice for Sonic's 'Freak Out A Leash' was created by Todd McFarlane, famous for the highly successful Spawn series and designer of the Metal Gear Solid action figures.

Speed Freaks

PUBLISHER: Sony | **DEVELOPER:** Funcom | **RELEASE DATE:** July | **GAME TYPE:** Racing
NO. OF PLAYERS: 1–2 | **PRICE:** £34.99 | **COMPATIBILITY:** Dual Shock Analog, Memory Card

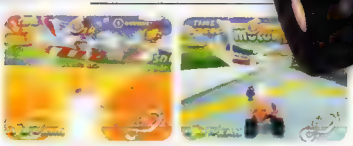
DIGGING YOUR SCENE

One of the nicest touches in Speed Freaks is the detail in the backgrounds as you zoom past. Here the race takes place in a fairground with the rides whirling around. Most impressive is a rollercoaster which actually goes over the track.

FIRST TEN MINUTES

FIRST TEN 09:59 MINUTES

Wow, this is fast. Look at the great animation... hold on, where did everyone go?



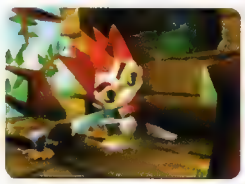
LEFT: Lightning flashes give super speed to your car, be wary of losing control!

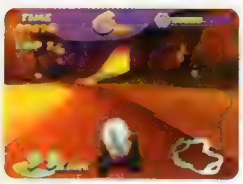
LADIES, GENTLEMEN, DOGS OF ALL AGES, START YOUR ENGINES AND PREPARE FOR BIG HEADED CRAZY FUN WITH SOME COLOURFUL KIDS.

Aside from the well documented idiosyncrasies of Japanese culture (see last issue), another of their crazy passions is to super deform everything; at least as far as computer game characters are concerned. This does not mean that they go around chopping the legs off people, rather it refers to the art of reducing the scale of characters so that their bodies are tiny and their heads are inflated to ridiculous size. This practice has now reached such extremes that I recently saw a super deformed Bruce Lee figure. No, really. Anyway, it was inevitable that one day this idea would be transported onto the PlayStation in one form or another and here it is, taking the racing genre and giving it a shiny cartoon sheen.

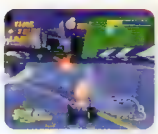
Speed King

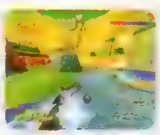
Speed Freaks gives you the opportunity to compete against a number of equally cute characters to determine who is king of the track. This being a light-hearted title, instead of Nigel Mansell or equally 2D real drivers, you can become a nerd with huge spectacles, a sweet little girly with big eyes or even a loveable pooch. One cart even features two separate characters squashed into the driving seat – due to the weight, the car is slow to rev up and reach maximum speed, but when it does it has better handling than any of the





"You must master the weight/handling ratio before you can steal first place."

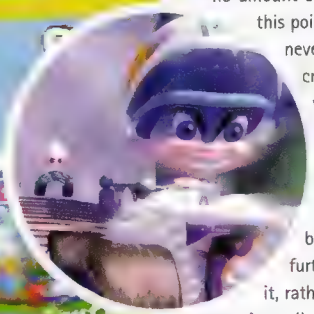




smaller carts. This weight/handling feature is something that must be mastered in order to race effectively and steal pole position, so don't just play as the one who looks best or coolest or you may find yourself in sixth place.

Welcome To The Jungle

Each tournament takes place over four different tracks, based around a number of picturesque locations including a jungle level, where you speed through caverns featuring some atmospheric lighting effects, and a level where the tunnel is cut through a huge windmill. As well as this, there are many short cuts to help you to victory, such as riding through a pirate ship on the first level. Collecting boxes on the track will give your racer power-ups, including the usual speed boosts and missiles.



One thing that may work against Speed Freaks is the difficulty level. One would imagine that such a sweet looking title would be simple, but this is far from the truth with this game. Even on the beginners level, it takes a large number of plays until you can even overtake one cart. Competitors will quickly disappear into the distance, never to be seen again and no amount of power ups will put you back in contention. At this point it would be easy to throw the game down and never bother picking it up again, especially when the crowd realise your ineptitude and start booing you very loudly. This will happen regularly for the first few hours, even in the Station Mansion, where gaming genius Christian Slater was heard regularly swearing at the screen and stomping around like a baby. Persevere though, and you *will* be rewarded with the thrill of your first victory; furthermore it will actually feel as if you have earned it, rather than been handed it on a shiny platter.

As well as the tournament mode, you can play a time attack game where you must beat your previous best, which proves helpful for getting the hang of controlling the car before entering the race proper. Two players can also compete in head-to-head matches on the level of their choice.

Overall, Speed Freaks, if you give it a chance, is an addictive, exciting and fast racer, which proves to be as challenging as it is colourful. **SNORTED BY** KENDALL LACEY

COMPETITION

BOMBERMAN FANTASY RACE

Little guy stops blowing things up and takes to the track.

68%

STREET RACER

Er, well it's racing and its in the street. What more do you need to know.

79%

LEFT TO RIGHT: Don't spend too long gawping at the scenery – there's a race to win but for those less easily distracted; this cute babe's cart is light as a feather, so prepare to spin out; now, you don't want to go for a swim in this lava pool.

THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT

All the characters featured in Speed Freaks are undeniably cute, but all have very distinct personalities and perform differently around the various tracks. The feisty young bird is Maraca, who may be a touch smelly but knows a thing or two about racing, just don't ask her on a date or she'd probably hit you.

STATION VERDICT

PLUS

Brimming with colour, this is a speedy racer that doesn't take itself too seriously, but delivers in the graphics and playability stakes.

MINUS

The cartoon look may put more mature players off, and it isn't the first karting game on the market... The steep learning curve doesn't help.

86%

"initially tough, but perseverance will reveal a fun, addictive game."

Legacy Of Kain Soul Reaver

PLAYSTATION TRIPLE A TITLE

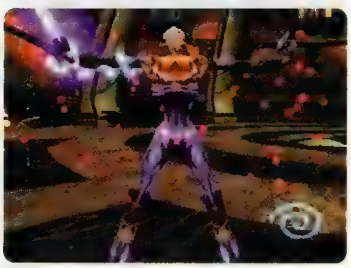
PUBLISHER: Eidos | DEVELOPER: Crystal Dynamics | RELEASE DATE: Out now | GAME TYPE: 3D Exploration
NO. OF PLAYERS: One | PRICE: £44.99 | COMPATIBILITY: Dual Shock Analog, Memory Card

FIRST TEN MINUTES

FIRST TEN 09:59 MINUTES

You will be struck down by the immediate 'darkness' of the game, not to mention the intuitive controls and eminently sinister graphics.

LIKE MOST ADOLESCENT BOYS, THE EXISTENCE OF RAZIEL IS ONE OF ANGST, FRUSTRATION AND IRE. RAZIEL, HOWEVER, INHABITS A WORLD DARKER THAN THE ETERNAL PITS OF HELL. WITH NO KLEENEX...



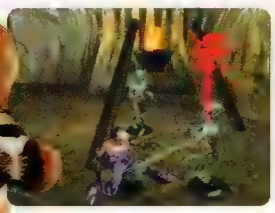
A millennium after the events of Legacy Of Kain, the vampire lord is now almost a deity thanks to his arcane powers; a Satanic figure of wrath and domination. To fortify his rulership, Kain appointed a phantasmogorical cadre, an undead legion of six vampires as his generals, of which Raziel is one. The powers of these dark gods allow them to continually evolve, each physical alteration making Kain and his generals more powerful and malignant than before. Kain, as his rank commands, always evolved the black gifts first – until Raziel was gifted with wings. For this impudence, Kain condemned Raziel to the Lake Of The Dead, the Golgotha of the undead. After several millennia spent in this damnation, Raziel is revived by an entity known as The Elder, who seeks balance in Nosgoth, and gives Raziel the chance for vengeance and to vanquish Kain.

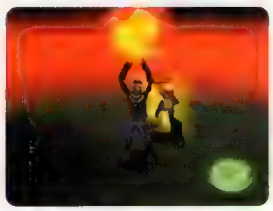
ABOVE: And today on the Milan catwalks, Raziel the Bestial, modelling the latest in decomposed chic.

Beaver Las Vegas

As the game seamlessly flows from the opening FMV and realtime cutscenes which introduce the storyline, the atmosphere and concept of Soul Reaver immediately assaults you like a succubus. The more literary amongst you will begin to discern the parallels between the 'fallen angel' Raziel's journey through purgatory to redemption and Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, as well as Milton's *Paradise Lost*. The initial level is a training ground to brief you in the controls and game world, a novel twist as training levels external to the game structure, Lara's house par example, are easily skipped in favour of the game proper.

Many brief, whip-sharp cutscenes litter this level and the entire game, allowing you to realise just how seamless and accomplished Soul Reaver is. There are no pauses for loading (except between main levels) and each cutscene is dramatic in its





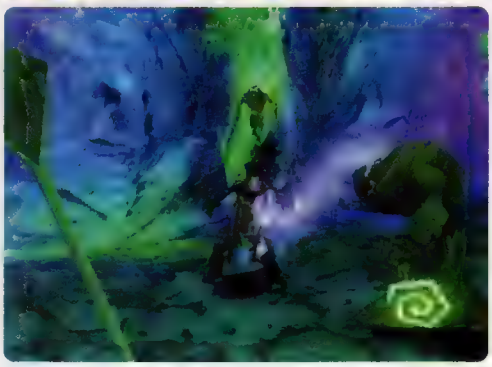
The predecessor to this title saw the rise to power of fledgling vampire Kain. After avenging himself, Kain exacted his revenge by subjugating the world of Nosgoth and beginning an extermination of the frail human residents, either for a dalliance or a meal. The reign of Kain is now about to be usurped by Raziel, seething with the rage of vengeance.

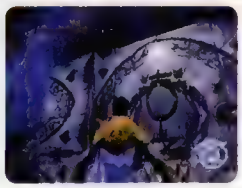
DID YOU KNOW...

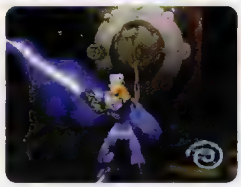
No.1 Carnival Of Souls (1962) is a very scary mist movie with low SFX and no gore whilst is guaranteed to raise goosebumps. It tells of a woman who escapes from a car crash only to discover she actually died after all. Spooky.

INTRODUCE YOURSELF

The quality of the cinematics in Soul Reaver is enough to make you check that your PlayStation is not in fact a high-end PC. It is without peer; judge for yourself...







ABOVE: Vampire wraiths drain the soul faster than an episode of EastEnders.

own right, with rapid cutting and swaying angles of a Kubrik variety, bolstered by a musical score of discord and shimmering ambience, an amalgam of *Nine Inch Nails* and *Dead Can Dance*. The speech in the game is also of an unexpectedly high standard, with Raziel sounding intense and focused with perturbing lines of dialogue, such as: 'The birth of one of Kain's abominations traps the essence of life'. It is pure thespianism compared to the stilted 'You are the master of unlocking' of *Resident Evil* et al.

Satanic Splendour

Intrinsic to the appreciation of the superb and pensive atmosphere of Soul Reaver are the graphics; how bleakly wondrous they are. Raziel himself has a ragged beauty as he swathes through levels resembling a creation of Giger or Bosch. The textures employed are magnificent, with rocks and walls looking almost photo-realistic. Water shimmers, incandescent realtime lighting offers scant illumination and monoliths tower ominously over you. Variety is also prevalent, with levels varying enormously, ranging from barren cities, desecrated churches and bleak moorland. The world created is both grotesque and beautiful, one of the finest looking PlayStation titles that this grizzled hack has ever seen. Trust me, that's quite a compliment.

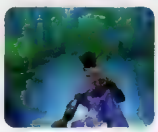
Aesthetics, however, are not the crux of a game. Soul Reaver boasts highly interactive scenery and Raziel himself has more moves than a slimy Italian gigolo in a nightclub, made easy to master via the intuitive camera that always keeps apace with your meanderings. Raziel shames Lara with both his liquid-fluid animation and array of movements, being able to jump, swim, glide/parachute on

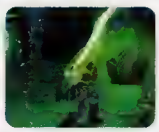
rudimentary wings, attack with objects, climb without using an 'action' button, crouch and sneak. The dead are indeed nimble.

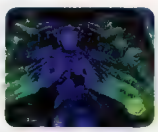
I Am The Resurrection And The Afterlife

Acolytes of evil await Raziel in both the spectral and material realms (more on realms later), dire monstrosities such as parasitic sluaghs, lingering vampire wraiths, human vampire hunters and worshippers, the twisted servitors of Kain's generals. Combat is considerably more advanced that the 'point and shoot' interface of *Tomb Raider*. Raziel

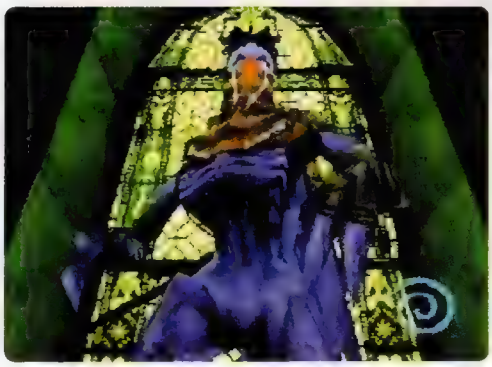
"The world created is both grotesque and beautiful, one of the finest looking PlayStation titles..."

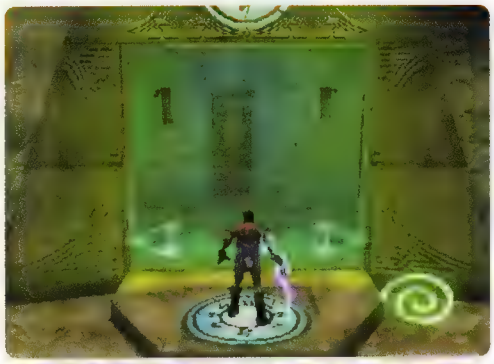






is able to use the Soul Reaver sword, a bastardised and nefarious Excalibur, as well as glyph-spells. Holding ⓑ in combat makes Raziel face the enemy directly, mano et mano (or mortis et mortis if you prefer) allowing him to dodge and attack with precision. He can also impale enemies on spears, *Mortal Kombat* style, as well as pick foes up and hurl them onto spikes or into water (effective against





ABOVE: The background detail far surpasses anything Tomb Raider can offer.

the undead). As the game progresses, Raziel acquires more 'glyphs', or spells, eventually enough to form a dismal grimoire including telekinetic, sonic and fire attacks, all impressively animated.

Raziel must also procure new skills if progress is to be made, such as: wall climbing, making his substance incorporeal to pass through gates, constricting enemies/objects and possessing another creature, moving and acting in the host body. These skills highlight the non-linear nature of the game as certain areas of levels are unassailable without a specific skill acquired later, requiring Raziel to travel back to that level with the new skill, adding to the already prodigious longevity of the game.

Lemarchand Configuration

Raziel is also able to acquire the skill to transport between the material and the physical plane, opening up a Pandora's box of gameplay and puzzle opportunities. Reminiscent of *Legend Of Zelda* on the SNES, Raziel may have to phase-shift to the alternate plane if he is to pass a specific area or reach a certain pinnacle as scenery often warps and metamorphises between planes with Kafka-esque abandon. What is beyond the grasp in one plane may be attainable in the other. Puzzles extend beyond the banal and tepid 'pull-switch-open-door' tasks of *Tomb Raider*, involving object and plane manipulation, as do the awesome boss characters – Raziel must confront each of Kain's generals to gain their skills and each guardian is a task in itself, involving cerebral as well as physical conflicts (see boxout below). Guardians look especially repugnant, and one bears striking resemblance to the *Alien* queen. Purchase this and discover the eldritch and baroque beauty of the nocturnal. To paraphrase, Soul Reaver will tear your soul apart...

BELL, BOOK AND CANDLED BY NICK WHITE

MONSTER MASH

Other undead characters who need to feature in videogames ASAP.

Pinhead

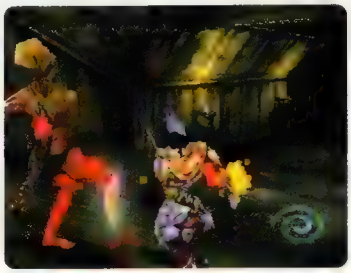
Clive Barker's Hellraiser is one of the most galling and psychologically disturbed horror films of the decade. The malign Pinhead merits a game of his own to say 'No more tears, it's a waste of good suffering' in.

Freddy Krueger

The man who made manicurists rich. A game of amoral 'slice and dice' with the disfigured, wisecracking icon would sell by the metric ton. Or get banned by the killjoys at the BBFC.

Jason Voorhees

The enigmatic, hockey mask adorned homicidal maniac would benefit from a PSX makeover. Imagine slaying asinine teenagers with items like pliers, rusty pipes and waste disposal units.



COMPETITION

RESIDENT EVIL 2
Offers more atmosphere than an oxygen tent and a plot worthy of a million horror pulp novels.

88%

TOMB RAIDER
Similarly displayed esoteric locations and a milieu previously unknown in gaming.

95%

STATION VERDICT

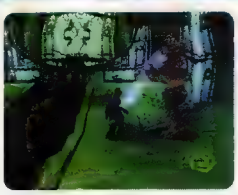
SUR Vast, immersive, morbid and utterly engrossing. Tomb Raider fused with the macabre. Stoker and Lovecraft will be smiling in their graves.

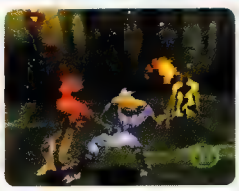
DOWNS Even the most opposed to horror would find pleasure in the world of Raziel. The unwholesome ethos of the game may offend puritans. Tough.

93%

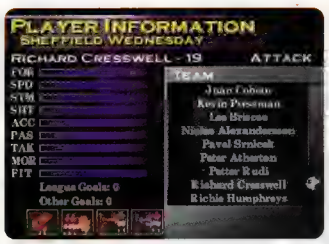
"incontrovertibly a darkly brilliant moment in the PlayStation experience."

MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSSTONES





The guardians Raziel encounters are awesome monoliths of splendour and innovation, especially the Alien Queen-alike...



FA Manager

PUBLISHER: Eidos | **DEVELOPER:** Krisalis | **RELEASE DATE:** Out now | **GAME TYPE:** Football Management Sim
NO. OF PLAYERS: 1-2 | **PRICE:** £34.99 | **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card

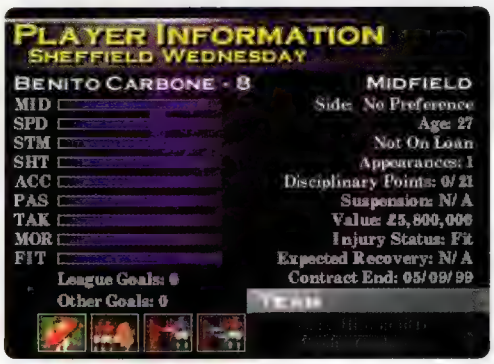
FIRST TEN MINUTES

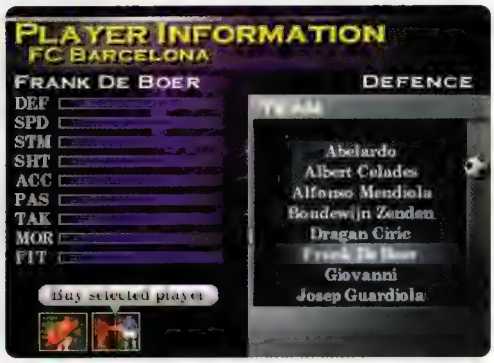
Okay I've chosen my team and I'm waiting for my first game, all these options will take a while...

TODAYS FIXTURES
TUESDAY AUGUST 18, 1998
Cheltenham V Hednesford Town
Doncaster Rovers V Southport
Farnborough Town V Forest Green Rovers
Hereford United V Leek Town
Morecambe V Barrow
Northwich Victoria V Kidderminster Harriers
Rushden & Diamonds V Welling United

ABOVE: Find yourself a half decent player here.

I'VE SEEN YOU, SHOUTING AT THE TELEVISION TELLING ALEX FERGUSON HOW TO DO HIS JOB. SO NOW IS YOUR CHANCE TO STEP INTO HIS SHOES...





There I was, sitting in the STATION harem minding my own business, when Dazza storms in and tells me I am reviewing a football management game. Having thought this was a joke, I laughed till I cried, but he was deadly serious. I was in a cold sweat, imagining a day of toil, strife and above all, no fun. Yet, my fears were misguided, for once FA Manager flickered onto the screen, like a brand new Dyson it sucked me straight in and wouldn't let go.

Firstly, though, this is not a title concerned with bells and whistles or a big front end full of FMV, it is much more subtle than that. It is about the every day running of the football club, rather than speeding through highlights of the year in an arcade fashion. Everything that the real bigwigs go through will crop up in the course of the game, whether it be players being injured and benched for a few months, or your gate not achieving the sales it should be. Seeing as how this title is the only management simulation produced with the full endorsement of the Football Association, you can play as any team in any of the four divisions, from fabled triple achievers Manchester United, to the struggling minnows, such as Cardiff and Swansea. You

WHO'S THE MAIN ATTRACTION?

As your players' abilities improve, other clubs will become interested and make offers that you may want to consider. Here we see Tarquin making a pretty packet, but Patrick Bateman must be disappointed that his player is completely worthless. That's management folks...

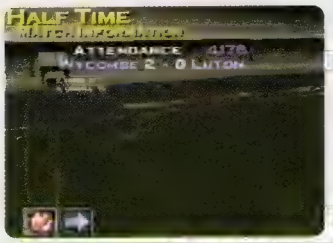
LEFT TO RIGHT: If all goes well, you should find yourself smugly sitting at the top of the league.

"Everything that the real bigwigs go through will happen to you in the course of the game..."

can chose from the bigger clubs, and face the pressure of keeping the board happy by continuing to thrive, or perhaps prefer to join a smaller team and struggle to get people interested in your fixtures and put your head in your hands when the attendance is a moral shattering 400 fans. Get more money for the club by buying and selling players, or just borrow a star for a certain period. All your players have negotiated contracts and wage packets and all of these can be altered easily, so for example, when facing the best teams you can dangle a £300 bonus carrot under a player's nose to make him strive harder for victory.

Despite this plethora of gaming techniques, the control interface makes it simple to come to terms with and after half an hour of playing, you should be clicking from screen to screen without any trouble. The satisfaction is immense when you watch your team rise through the ranks – and the statistics still keep coming as you watch for the top scorers of the season so far. Before each match, you are presented with a Tactigrid and from here you can choose the formation of your team, the style of play and who to leave on the sub bench. When you are happy with the bunch of reprobates you call a team, it is time to sit on the sidelines and discover your fate as you enter in-game mode. A small screen appears on which you can watch the match whilst still controlling tactics and changing players. The animation here is smooth and fast and the excitement mounts as the minutes tick away. Goal scorers and times are displayed on the screen also, adding to the televisual effect. Tension is also heightened by the inclusion of commentary by Brian Moore, which may lead you to believe you're sat in front of the television rather than the PlayStation.

Hours can effortlessly fly by as you decide to take your team through one more match before turning off. When you finally do drag yourself away, you can save the progress of your team and continue the season later. If someone like me, whose interest in football is notoriously low, can enjoy this game so much, the footballing junkie will no doubt melt with pleasure upon loading up the disc. **SIGNED UP BY** KENDALL LACEY



LEFT TO MIDDLE: The lovely Wycombe take Luton to the cleaners; advice is always on hand for those tricky decisions, you may try it your own way though, but remember, if you pay peanuts you get monkeys...

MY LITTLE EMPIRE

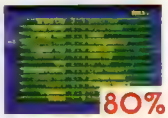
To add extra challenge to your game, when your team starts winning and you get to the top of the league, you can make things harder for yourself by taking over a less successful club and making them shine.

COMPETITION

PLAYER MANAGER
A more dated style and a duller management sim, didn't hold the attention span like this one.

69%

PREMIER MANAGER '99
So far, the undisputed king of the management genre. Sold huge amounts early this year.



80%

STATION VERDICT

UPS
More detailed footie stats than you could shake a stick at and fully endorsed too. Will engross the most ardent of sceptics.

DOWNS
Not a great deal of variety of play and not one for action freaks, since all the player input is purely on a technical basis.

90%

"A highly detailed, realistic and playable title, essential for footie junkies"

PSTATION TRIPLE A TITLE

Evil Zone

PUBLISHER: Titus | **DEVELOPER:** Yukes | **RELEASE DATE:** Out now | **GAME TYPE:** Manga Scrapper
NO. OF PLAYERS: 1-2 | **PRICE:** £39.99 | **COMPATIBILITY:** Dual Shock Analog Memory Card

FIRST TEN MINUTES

FIRST TEN 09:59 MINUTES

Relent and let the spectacle astound you. After being soothed by the intro, the game disrupts the calm with more intensity than ex-lax enema.

EVIL ZONE: ENOUGH PYROTECHNIC ACTIVITY TO GIVE EVEN JEAN-MICHEL JARRE AN INFERIORITY COMPLEX.

Personally, I blame Yie Ar Kung Fu on the Spectrum. Not for the state of the world economy or the twisted machinations of the cosmic logos. J'accuse the 8bit, sprite based game for inventing the beat 'em-up genre with a single nunchuk clutching hand. Most of these games have been appalling enough to warrant their own daytime TV 'confessional' talk show, probably hosted by Vanessa Feltz (shudder). Fighting games today are, on the whole, derivative, uninspired and 'ten-a-penny' as my Gran would say. Evil Zone is akin to the enigmatic stranger in a classic western, entering 'Beat 'em-up Saloon' to heated gazes from the regulars settled in their sequel-spawning places. Evil Zone grins, draws both barrels and prepares to fight for supremacy.

Crazy Beaver Style

On the surface, Evil Zone would appear to be a game that fails to take itself seriously, opting for cheap visual thrills over any expanse of gameplay or longevity. As we have been taught, though, judge not by appearances for superfice is sometimes a weapon, sometimes a diversion. Evil Zone is not a game to discarded casually. Like a coiled asp, don't underestimate the striking power and appeal of Evil Zone. The instant you enter the pugilist selection screen the realisation dawns that Evil Zone offers a different, pleasantly twisted, slant on traditional beat 'em-up events.

RIGHT: For more information about the manga stylings of the characters, see our feature overleaf.

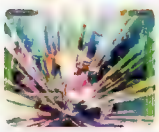
No.1 DID YOU KNOW...

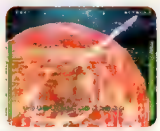
One of the most endearing images of Evil Zone is the character in Han-Gyaku-Ken who is identical to Leonard Nimoy's spiked character, except for the omission of a small goatee beard.

LEFT TO RIGHT: Some of the close-up angles really add to the frenzy; she would have yelled 'Han-do-ken', except that it was heavily copyrighted by some twat in pyjamas; even if a werewolf could get past the pentagram, surely it'd break its teeth on the armour; another backbench MP relaxes after a hard day procuring a pay rise.

Characters available range from a lurking, psychotic Satanist, a winsome schoolgirl with an eerie metaphysical guardian and a mech-warrior who calls down nuclear strikes from satellites in geosynchronous orbit. Somewhat more *outré* than Ryu or Nina Williams, oui? When these charged individuals plunge into combat, the manga aspect of the game becomes evident; massively so. From the first instant of play Evil Zone erupts, Vesuvius-like, into a mêlée of limbs, acrobatics and stadium-scale atomics. The pantheon of combat moves in fighting games is, on the whole, not quite as grandiose as it should be. Combat simulations should be about pure escapism and cinematics, not paltry fireballs or teleport moves. Evil Zone is, thus far, the most authentic replica of cinema/manga available on the PlayStation to date.

"Like a coiled asp, don't underestimate the striking power and appeal of Evil Zone"



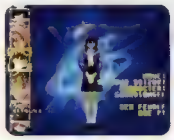


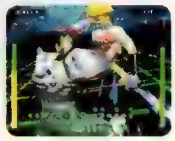
Han-do-ken!

Evil Zone, unlike life, is not a game of caution and tactical manoeuvre. Evil Zone is about hurt, hurt that almost makes you physically wince or emit strange cooing noises at the splendour of the attack. Either way, the overall effect is of a well conceived game well executed. Each character has a wealth of moves at their disposal, yet not enough to make you wonder 'will I ever use that many moves, and aren't most of them uncannily similar anyway?'. Moves are a joy to behold, partly due to the dynamic way in which they are portrayed and partly due to the sheer ingenuity of them. Voodoo dolls, face-straddling, occult powers and doppelgängers, all are in the scenario.

Like cutscenes, special moves occur in a panning, film-like manner, convincing you that your PlayStation has in fact become a VCR playing the latest manic manga release. Again deviating from the straight and narrow path of beat 'em-up righteousness is the way these actions are accessed.

Evil Zone is purely an arcade-style fighting game, ideal fodder for those drunken gaming urges. For example, the game employs a perfect control system; two buttons. The graphics are far beyond functional, although not quite of the *Tekken 3* standard. Naturally, the expected options are available: Survival, Versus and secrets unlocked with completion, yet this is mere icing on the cake of chop-socky splendour that is Evil Zone. You really have no choice. Purchase. Now. **BEATEN TO DEATH BY** NICK WHITE





RIGHT: Practice the atomic moves before taking them out to war.

COMPETITION

TEKKEN 3
The monarch of the combat genre. Much favoured by lovers of complicated combos.

DEAD OR ALIVE
A game renowned for the undulating jabberbangs, rather like *Tomb Raider*.

STATION VERDICT

YES
Deviates from the stagnant beat 'em-up genre by injecting a dose of playability. It's about experience and wonder, not technical accuracy.

DOWNS
Chin strokers may dismiss it, using words such as 'puerile' and 'simple'. They should really get out more. Maybe meet a nice girl.

93%

STATION TRIPLE A TITLE

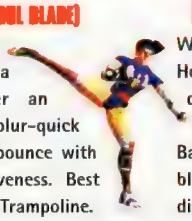
"Intensity in ten cities. Essential for any lover of action and reckless animé."

WHO IS DA BEST?

Here are just a few of our favourite pain bringers to grace the PlayStation over the years.

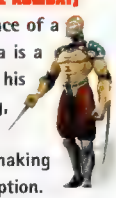
TAKI (FROM SOUL BLADE)

Curvaceous and deadly, mystical ninja Taki can bewilder an opponent with her blur-quick evasions and then pounce with devastating effectiveness. Best move is the Human Trampoline.



BARAKA (FROM MORTAL KOMBAT)

With the leer and semblance of a Hellraiser Cenobite, Baraka is a daunting foe. Not only his remarks are cutting, Baraka is equipped with blades on his wrists, making distance attack the only option.

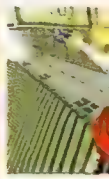


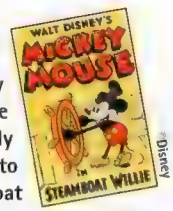
BLANKA (FROM STREET FIGHTER)

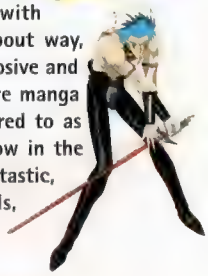
He's mean, he's lean and he's a goddamn fighting machine and , in the words of our beloved Suede, he's got a lot of electricity. Better than the slick and suave Ken or Ryu any day.

Nick White once more looks to the far side of the globe and sees the land where the consoles come from. This month his investigations make a deep incision to the heart of the aesthetic psyche as he explores the dinarus of the accelerated world of Jap animation.

anime mayhem







"...perhaps sir would prefer cat shit one; a morality tale of a gun-toting rabbit; watership down animé stylee."

Picture the scene. A steamship, shot on coarse monochrome film, ploughs along an equally grainy black and white river. A grotesquely caricatured mouse with projecting ears begins to whistle and cavort merrily. This cartoon, Steamboat Willie, was the first animated feature with synchronised sound and therefore, in a roundabout way, was also the foundation stone of the manic, explosive and hyperactive brand of animated dynamism that are manga features. Evil Zone, for example, has been referred to as 'manga-esque', which may cause a furrowed brow in the uninitiated. Read on for an insight into a fantastic, futuristic world of mutations, schoolgirls, pyrotechnics and unfeasibly gargantuan robots causing Twister-like carnage.

Anime what?

Animé (pronounced ani-may) is the essential word when discussing manga. Manga, y'see is only a branch of animé, a small company in a huge business empire, if you will. Animé is simply animation Japanese style, Manga is a particular company producing especially dynamic animé, with unrestrained plots and funned-up, junk-cut action sequences. It should

on the tenth day of animé

Ten irrefutable laws of Jap-animation

1. Metaphysical irregularity
In animé, gravity is purely for entertainment purposes. Schoolgirls can leap hundreds of feet skyward and land with a nimble pirouette. Mech-robots can plummet thousands of feet and receive only the merest graze.

2. Temporal instability
When the protagonist performs an action that is particularly cool, time will freeze, allowing a dramatic view of events. Time will also freeze when a friend/lover receives a fatal blow in combat. Conversely, time accelerates during frenetic fight sequences.

3. Predictable mortality
Animé heroes will invariably perish in one of two ways: either so rapidly that they could never see it coming, or in a protracted death wrack where the character espouses a final soliloquy on society, morality or love.

4. Dramatic multilicity
Particularly smart acts, such as the bad guy getting punted squarely in the face, will be shown again three of four times, from three or four dramatic angles, accompanied by a single, piercing sound effect for esoteric emphasis.

5. Innate combustibility
Everything explodes. Everything. Cats, bins, people, buildings... Also, everything that explodes always bulges ominously first, followed by a close-up of the shocked face of the protagonist, huge eyed and gaping.

6. Ocular gargantua
Eyes will always be extremely disproportionate to the relative dimensions of the face. The cuter the female character, the more doe-eyed she will be. Eyes also expand to dinner plate size at moments of dramatic revelation.

7. Firearm inexhaustibility
Nobody ever runs out of ammo. Ever. Even the most minute of guns can emit a salvo of bullets for minutes on end. Guns ONLY jam when the hero is about to get shot.

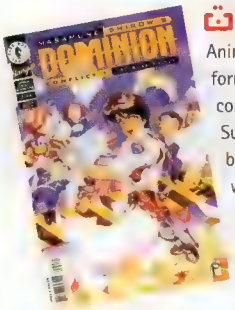
8. Demonic consistency
Demons always have at least four eyes, tentacles, fangs and dwarf the human frame. Green is the preferred colour. Only bladed/blessed weapons can harm them.

9. Female decency
Female characters will invariably have chests the size of Everest and wear the most scant and brief of outfits into battle. Any female wearing a number of garments which exceeds these limits will have them ripped off at some point, usually during combat.

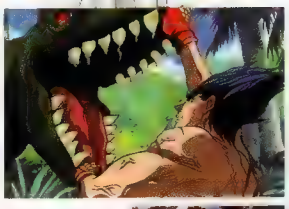
10. Juvenile triumph
Schoolgirls and adolescent boys will invariably be the saviours of the universe, after realising hidden, innate powers they never knew they had.

come as no real shock, then, to discover that 'manga' translates as 'irresponsible pictures'. Japanese animé, unlike much animation, is often aimed specifically at mature audiences, dealing with thematic points or content that may offend the more sensitive, such as the seminal *Fist Of The North Star*, where a specific variety of punch has the amusing side-effect of exploding the cranium of the recipient, or prolapsing his internal organs. Animé is a diverse medium, with substance ranging from horror to martial arts to epic romance to sport. And the artwork; razor sharp, conceptual, daring and brash. Makes *Rugrats* look a little banal, oui?

über-beano

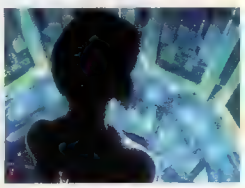


Animé actually began, as is the case for many animated art-forms, in the guise of strip comics. When we British contemplate comics, we perceive nostalgic images of hazy Sunday afternoons with the twenty page *Beano* from our brain; languishing over the knavish exploits of ne'er-do wells such as Dennis the Menace, The Bash Street Kids and the suspiciously named Billy Whizz. The manga comic books are, when compared to the emaciated British counterparts, voluminous tomes, printed on cheap paper, normally several hundred pages in length. An ideal way to pass a dull commute, or bludgeon to death an unfavourable family member. These comics eschew the need for bulging superheros or roguish children, focusing on more 'eccentric' characters and obscure situations, appealing to the slightly less repressed Japanese sensibilities.



joyead-xnimé

The Japanese thrive on tie-ins, the commercial art of associated merchandising is almost a cultural phenomenon, their equivalent of seven pints and a madras on a Friday night. All animé inevitably ends up in a tangible form, be it *Dragon Ball Z* keyrings, *Appleseed* dolls or *Akira* teabags. Successful PlayStation games have also made the transition, giving us animé versions of both *Tekken* and *Street Fighter*. Plans to make an animé of *Tomb Raider* were jettisoned as Lara's chest dominated too much of the screen, the result resembling the Alps in summer. The transition is also common the other way round, with animé characters hitting the PlayStation; see *Ghost In The Shell*, for example.

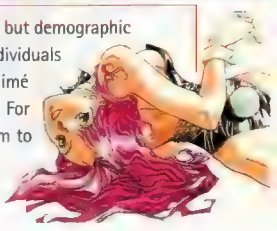


surreal-o-vision

Animé, being Japanese and therefore 'whacko' to Western eyes, never follows the straight and narrow path of expected norm. Even the Japanese would become weary of a relentless diet of explosions, robots and similar plots. The prevention for this potential ennui is to cultivate plots so outré that you have to watch with a fascinated mixture of awe, confusion and adoration. For example, *Super Catgirl Nuku Nuku* is an animé feature which follows the exploits of a girl who is, in fact, a female android with the brain of a cat and supreme athletic skills. Perhaps Sir would prefer *Cat Shit One*; a morality tale of a gun-toting rabbit; *Watership Down* animé stylee. For those amongst you hankering for cute, you're welcome to *Bosco Adventure*, featuring saccharine-fluffy animals in a balloon. Hopefully it will explode, Hindenburg-style, hopefully immolating *@!*ing *Hello Kitty* as well.

storm in x d-cup

Animé, being ostensibly a male interest hobby (NOTE – This is not chauvinistic conjecture but demographic fact) has to cater for more masculine tastes. As the main cerebral preoccupation of said individuals is women, a fusion of women and animé seems a logical choice. Like confectionery, animé women come in various textures, shapes and wrappers, all just the right side of tasty. For cartoons, that is. Not that I fixate on manga girlies y'understand. All animé women seem to follow a basic template, one that resembles a plastic surgery catalogue or an Aryan über-lassie. Doe eyes, scanty clothes, whiney voice and hidden powers, all categorise the animé femme-cutale. Schoolgirl or gun-wielding psychoette, take your pick.



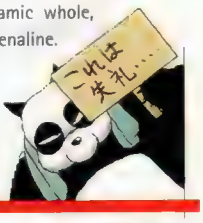
cold fusion

This feature has merely touched the tip of a gigantic iceberg, an iceberg of frantic action, mad personae and myriad explosions. Animé is escapism, pure and simple. It allows the viewer to intrude into a world of post-apocalyptic angst, of jiggling women with rocket launchers, of hundred foot robots and exquisite cinematography. Animé is directed with a precision and view that exceeds those of Carpenter or Tarantino at their best. Now is the time to discover animé, take its hand and let it lead you into an unworldly realm of the real and surreal, fusing to form a dynamic whole, sixteen-frames-a-second of pure adrenaline.

guns and 'gears

Imagine vast robots levelling cityscapes and unleashing volleys of projectile weapons with a NATO-like abandon. This is not the illusory world of a deranged feature writer, but an image from many manga films. One can trace the obsession with scale, the colossal ravaging the diminutive, to the *Godzilla* films of the '60s; essentially men in rubber suits romping over Ed Wood style sets. The modern age and the artist's pen has translated this into huge robots, piloted by a single individual, called Mechs or Gears. A vital component of this imagery is the weaponry; the bigger gun, the wider the carnage. Manga flip-shot, angled action sequences with these massive metallic behemoths spiralling and shooting are some of the most astonishing in animé.

For you chance to win Manga videos and merchandise, see our competition on page 92. Next month, Nick looks at the portrayal of women in videogames.



Aironauts

PUBLISHER: Red Storm | **DEVELOPER:** Red Lemon | **RELEASE DATE:** June | **GAME TYPE:** Flight/Carnage
NO. OF PLAYERS: One | **PRICE:** £39.99 | **COMPATIBILITY:** Dual Shock Analog, Memory Card

FIRST TEN MINUTES

AHHHH! F***ING CONTROLS! These sage utterances will be the only words to leave your mouth in the first ten minutes, although it does get easier.

SUPER FLY GUYS

Honk

Honk the circus clown was imprisoned for his high morality; he murdered the vicious ringmaster, a beater of women and children. After this murder, Honk went on the run as a renegade clown, dishing out justice to evil-doers. Probably with something a little more harsh than custard pies and squirty flowers.

Hiroshi Badda

Baseball fiend Badda made a killing on the stock market by recording calls made by stockbrokers in the back of his cab. His culminating crime was to use the Governor of Hawaii's head in a televised baseball game.

IS IT A BIRD? IS IT A PLANE? NO, IT'S A SOCIALLY MALADJUSTED PSYCHOPATH WITH WINGS INTENT ON TEARING YOU A NEW HOLE; BULLET SHAPED.

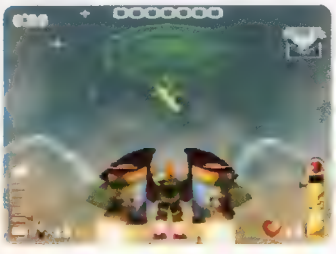
Close your eyes and relinquish your frail grip on reality. Focus your vision on the future. Imagine a future where all is as it should be: free beer, PlayStation 2 finally getting a UK release and the head of Vanessa Feltz on a stake. In this future the penal system has been reformed, and now offers hardened criminals one last chance of freedom; one shot at escape from Mr Big and his jar of Vaseline. That chance is in the form of the revolutionary television show Aironauts.

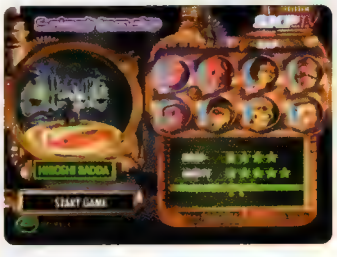
Imagine Aironauts as *Gladiators* with guns and flight but no steroids. The convict-contestant of Aironauts has to compete in tests of skill, manoeuvrability and combat ability. Success will merit a complete pardon and a new identity, failure is death. Better TV than *Last Of The Summer Wine*, eh?

Groovy Train

Like many things in life, training is crucial if you want to become the ultimate in death from above.

Many misguided people out there in gaming land assume that training modes are the abode of fools, the inept and girly girls. Such folly will send you crashing to the floor in a flaming glory.





LEFT TO RIGHT: A flying clown, the stuff of many a deluded nightmare; the arenas are packed with buildings to circumnavigate, or crash into, your choice; there's a fine set of reprobates to chose from, see the boxout for details.

Lady Alex

Devious socialite and 'it' girl Lady Alexandra Dale was the most intrepid cat burglar in America. Stealing from the safes of her peers, her kleptomania landed her a prime place as a svelte aironaut. I'll be leaving my windows unlocked in the near future, just in case, like...

Fraser Blade

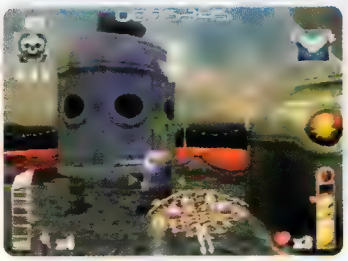
The tragic victim of a hospital mix-up at birth (our very own Dazza must surely be the bastard offspring of Bob Marley), Fraser Blade was the son of a notorious Scottish criminal sent to the home of a wealthy industrialist family. The family wealth funded Blade's passion for knives, but not his pleasure in using them on the public.

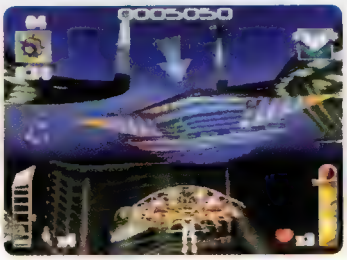
Douglas Whooshter

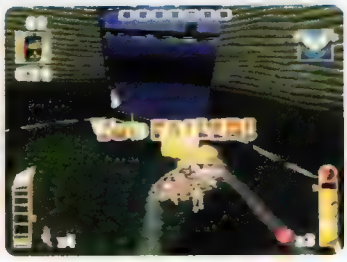
Raised on war moves, Douglas was convinced from an early age that he was a fighter pilot. A lofty ambition, considerably more noble than game show host. Whilst performing in his stunt plane, Douglas deemed it amusing to gun down 40 players at the SuperBowl. Why not the set of Coronation Street instead, eh?

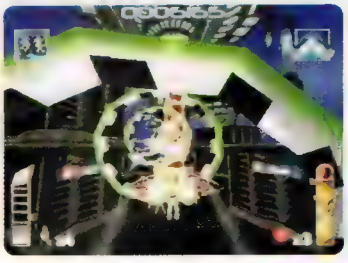
The Taxman

A prodigiously clever criminal, The Taxman was bullied at school. Gaining doctorates in both Chemistry and Biology, he used his knowledge for genetic experiments. Perhaps the Umbrella Corp. could use him in Raccoon City. With his genetic freaks, he exacted revenge on his school bullies with more than a wedgie.









LEFT TO RIGHT: Destroy that drone before it destroys you. Simple; mines on the pitch, a perfect way to liven up dull local football fixtures; well, my hands were slippery... with sweat. It was hot, alright?; Belinda was flattered, yet sure the wedding ring would never fit.

"The diversity of tasks is worthy of respect, ensuring that Aironauts never becomes repetitive or banal..."

Aironauts is a game of precision flying; requiring a brain surgeon's precision, as one slip can lead to ruin and death. The training mode offers classes on twelve aspects of flight, from basic handling to aerial combat to stunt moves. An hour spent becoming acquainted with the essentials of powered flight will be time well spent. It is here you will realise that your flight rig is incredibly versatile and easy to handle, especially with the Analog pad. After the basics have been mastered, the time is ripe to fill the skies with blood.

After all the build up, the game proper comes as a surprise. Aironauts is not, as one may justifiably assume at this stage, a game of fast paced kill frenzy in the skies.

Nail That Fokker

Each stage is divided up into five tasks; the first four must be completed before the final stage, fighting another aironaut, can be attempted. The diversity of tasks is worthy of respect, ensuring that Aironauts never becomes repetitive or banal. Each task involves completion of a number of criteria within a set time limit, and the assignments include: precision flight through a course of rings; protecting statues from thieving robotic drones; destroying gun emplacements; clearing an airborne minefield (inspiration by David Ginola). The rewards for completing missions are wings, which can be used to upgrade your rig at the end of each arena.

Navigation is never confusing as the arrow that guides you is fairly easy to read. Fighting the other Aironauts, though, is slightly more frustrating than it actually should be. Small flaws complicate the fight, such as the sometimes sluggish handling of your rig and the tendency of the lock-on missiles to target nearby mines or drones rather than the enemy aironaut, resulting in wasted shots when you think you have a lock. Your rig comes complete with a standard machine gun, its strength dependent on the character you choose, and the capacity to carry four homing missiles. Special weapons are also secreted in the arenas, for example giving your rig invincibility, powerful guns and napalm.

Lookit, Maw

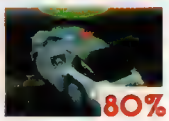
Aironauts, as well as being supremely playable, also handles itself well in the visual stakes. Each stage is sufficiently spacious and full of scenery to prove that no graphical power has been spared. Equally impressive is the fact that there is no scenery pop-up and the arena is constantly visible into the distance. Seven arenas are available to work through, inhabited by eight fellow psycho-fliers. The only real flaw with Aironauts is the distinctive lack of a two player mode, which would have propelled the game into the '90s.

NAVIGATED BY NICK WHITE

COMPETITION

G-POLICE

Blade Runner fantasists can immerse themselves in a dystopian future in this techno-chopper sim.



80%

OMEGA BOOST

Lovers of the third-person shooter may find roguish pleasure in this fiendish extravaganza.

90%

STATION VERDICT

UPS

An intriguing, smooth blend of ambient flight and measured combat. Like a good coffee, this should be savoured and enjoyed.

DOWNS

Some intricacies of flight will invariably frustrate those amongst you with a goldfish's attention span. Persevere, people!

86%

"Like a herbal bath full of piranhas; soothing yet tense and exhilarating."

Point Blank 2

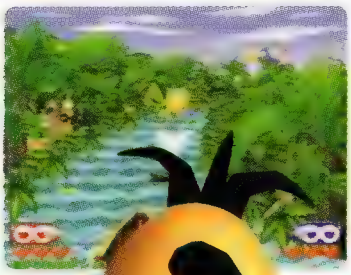
PUBLISHER: Sony | **DEVELOPER:** Namco | **RELEASE DATE:** September | **GAME TYPE:** Light Gun Shoot 'em-up
NO. OF PLAYERS: 1–2 | **PRICE:** £34.99 | **COMPATIBILITY:** Memory Card, Light Gun

FIRST TEN MINUTES

Fans of the original will instantly recognise the format, but the puzzles appear more complex and tougher.

PICK UP THAT PLASTIC SHOOTER AND GET READY FOR CRAZY CARTOONY FUN AND HIGH SPEED BLASTING ACTION.

If you were to push your way past all the puffa jacket wearing oiks in your local amusement arcade a few years ago, you would have been faced with an ever increasing slew of fighting games, car racing nonsense and not a lot else. The one shining star in that darkened cantina was Point Blank, a game so cool it even had blue and pink guns attached. Now here comes the sequel...



Doctor In The House

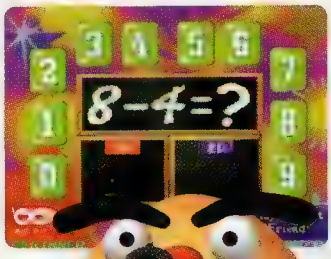
The imaginatively titled Point Blank 2 (*GunBarl* elsewhere) follows two strange explorer types, Dr Don and Dr Dan, and their adventures through various landscapes and scenarios. The arcade mode features 16 levels of shooting action, chosen at random from a collection of 48. These range from the typical – such as taking potshots at gangsters whilst trying to avoid hitting innocent people – to the frankly bizarre, the strangest of which requires you to shoot at sheep in order to shear them, leaving the poor things running around completely bare. It is this kind of humour (witness the strip-the-knight-of-his-armour level) which gives the title much of its considerable charm. This arcade mode truly comes into its own when two players battle simultaneously. The game records who gets the most points on each particular screen and counts who is most successful. Due to the fact that the order of the screens is randomly generated, it plays differently every time.

"The arcade mode features 16 levels of shooting action, chosen at random from a collection of 48."

IN YOUR HOUSE

The best screen in the original game had you blasting a car until it was completely wrecked. The idea is taken one step further in this sequel as now a house must be destroyed. Be successful and peeping toms will be able to see a startled doctor in the bath.

LEFT TO RIGHT: A very bizarre level in which you must shear a certain number of sheep by carefully putting them in your sights; this is the story mode where you visit various fairground attractions, each of which will test your marksmanship.



Mode Swings

Players can also go against each other in a tournament to determine who is the best, working on a knockout system where only the victor will survive. Another option is the 'Turf War' where both players have a certain number of squares on a board and every time you win a round you gain another patch of ground.

ABOVE: Blow up all the rolling barrels before they crush the little guy. His life depends upon your accuracy.

But, I hear you yell, I am a Sartre-loving otaku with no friends, what can this game offer me? Plenty, my friend plenty...

Adventure Time

For the single player, there is much to explore apart from the original arcade mode. The endurance game gives you only one life, meaning that you must complete each task at the first attempt or that's your lot. Victory on a level provides an amusing cutscene in which you run up a high tower, one level at a time. The point? Well, it's funny and that's enough.

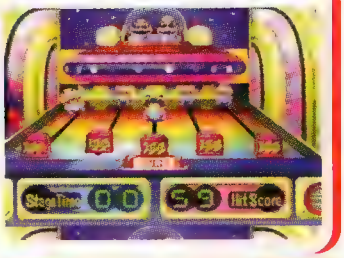
The last option is a more in-depth game, taking you on an adventure as an unlikely hero. The scenario runs that while visiting a theme park for the day your fun is interrupted by the King, who is distraught over the disappearance of his daughter. You agree to help and in order to do this must ride all the different attractions in the park, namely a space adventure, an underwater simulator, a haunted house and a speedy bullet train. Throughout your missions you will be called upon to complete screens in order to progress and if you manage to reach the end of an attraction, you will receive a clue about the disappearance. Get past these obstacles and you will face the crazy Cosmo Gang before you can claim victory. By this point the gameplay is insanely manic.

The variety of all these modes, along with the great collection of sub-games and skill levels, makes Point Blank 2 an excellent title guaranteed to put a smile on the visage of the most po-faced gamer. Once you start to uncover its charms you can expect a large number of sleepless nights as you try and reach that last elusive screen. Buy it and you'll have fun, fun, fun 'til your daddy takes the GunCon away.

BLOWN AWAY BY KENDALL LACEY

GANG WARS

The hardest challenge in the game pits you against the Cosmo Gang, a relentless group of characters intent on stealing your energy and thus ruining your day. Outfox them and it is glory; be defeated and GAME OVER.



COMPETITION

TIME CRISIS

Solid light gun adventure game which is not yet surpassed on the PlayStation.

88%

POINT BLANK

First appearance of the good doctors, won itself a considerable following who will enjoy no. 2.

90%

STATION VERDICT

PROS

Easy to pick up and play and highly addictive. Let's face it, there's not a huge amount of competition for light gun titles is there?

CONS

Colourful environment may not be to everyone's liking, and despite a plethora of models available, not many people own a GunCon...

91%

"This is fun with a capital F. Essential for light gun owners."

No.1 DID YOU KNOW...

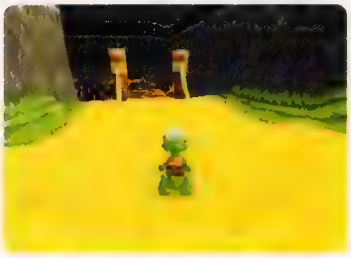
[illegible]

Croc 2

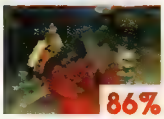
PUBLISHER: Fox Interactive | **DEVELOPER:** Argonaut | **RELEASE DATE:** July | **GAME TYPE:** 3D Platformer
NO. OF PLAYERS: One | **PRICE:** £34.99 | **COMPATIBILITY:** Dual Shock Analog, Memory Card

FIRST TEN MINUTES

More colours than a family bag of Skittles and sweeter than licking honey off of Britney Spears. Lurvely.



COMPETITION



CRASH BANDICOOT WARPED
86%
The king of the jumpy platform genre, and star of a thousand flasks.

A BUG'S LIFE
67%
Nice fun platformer or cynical cash-in? Try something else before finding out.

STATION VERDICT

UPS
Free roaming world with plenty of scope for exploration. Colourful environment, you know, for the kids to enjoy like.

DOWNS
Anything here for mature adults? Frustration rating is rather high as you can be propelled back a long way in the event of untimely demise.

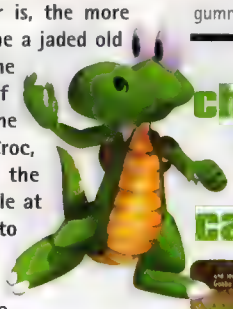
86%

"Like Drew Barrymore: cute, sweet and a lot of fun to mess around with."

BACK IN FAMILIAR TERRITORY WITH THE RETURN OF EVERYONE'S FAVOURITE LITTLE GREEN FELLA AND THOSE ANNOYING GOBBOS.

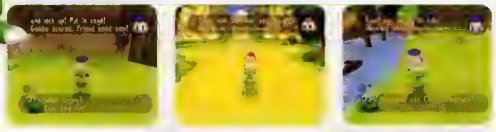
LEFT TO RIGHT: A mistimed jump here and Croc will be a walking colander; stay on the path or it will be roast Croc for tea; various pick-ups will aid you in your quest including the bizarrely named Magic Eye Zoomers.

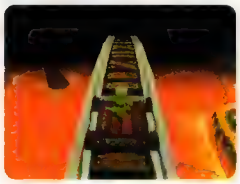
The unwritten law of the platform game seems to be that the more colours you put in and the sweeter the main character is, the more units you will eventually shift. Call me a jaded old hack, but it's the truth, just look at the success of the Rugrats game as proof of my theory. One of the leaders in the cute 'em-up genre has always been Croc, whose first adventure sold like the proverbial hot cakes and now available at under 20 smackers, it continues to succeed. Now, here he comes again with a second, more challenging adventure overflowing with more eye candy than a cannibal's lunchbox.

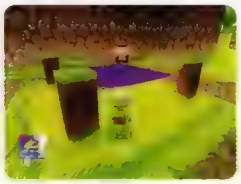


The basic premise sees Croc helping out the Gobbos, super furry animals incapable of keeping out of trouble and unable to look after themselves. Various missions need to be undertaken, from the obvious, such as finding a key to unlock the cage of a trapped Gobbo, to the frankly bizarre, like saving a bird who is the island mascot. Aside from his trusty backpack, Croc is armed with nothing except for a reward card which can be traded in against a number of fine accessories, including binoculars and little gummy chews which allow him to jump higher or further.

"A second, more challenging adventure overflowing with more eye candy than a cannibal's lunchbox..."







One of the best features is the wide variety of sub-games which are available. These range from a simple *Simon Says* game, to a jumping competition on a huge trampoline. The best sub-game is a *Mario Kart*-like racing game in which you must drive speed boats against the baddies.

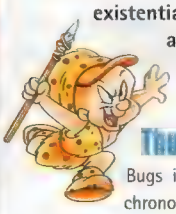
Now that we have mentioned the little plumber, it must be said that this game owes a lot to Nintendo's boy wonder, especially in his N64 incarnation. Many players may find themselves tearing their hair out in frustration at the difficulty of some screens but there is much here to recommend and fans of the genre should definitely check it out. **JUMPED BY** KENDALL LACEY

Bug's Bunny: Lost In Time

PUBLISHER: Infogrames | DEVELOPER: In-House | RELEASE DATE: Out now | GAME TYPE: 3D Platformer
NO. OF PLAYERS: One | PRICE: £30.00 | COMPATIBILITY: Dual Shock Analog, Memory Card

'WHAT'S UP, DOC?.' THE PROFITS FROM THIS BLATANT CASH IN, ONE WOULD ASSUME...

The life of a 'toon is fraught with peril. More peril than running naked through a collective of beehives. From all angles mortality is challenged; falling anvils, TNT disguised as a cake and falling from cliffs, the latter especially true of the existential Wile E Coyote. Bugs Bunny, smart arse he is, has taken matters one step further, going down the HG Wells path of time travel.



Thufferin' Thukertasch!

Bugs is able to visit various time zones in this chronological quest, from the Stone Age onwards. Progression in each era is via the accumulation of carrots and clocks. Each time zone has a central area, from which the various sub-levels can be accessed. Visually, the game is somewhat spartan, with bright primary colours and minimalist scenery making the game world like the original cartoons. To add to this you will see, for example, Bugs dodging Elmer Fudd with Daffy Duck and racing Marvin the Martian on Mars – it's an accomplished package.

Games of a cartoon origin always beg the question 'is this a game for kids or for us mature types to recapture a youth wasted on *Jet Set Willy*?'. It may be aimed at 'yoof' there is enough to raise a sweat. **CRUNCHED BY NICK WHITE**

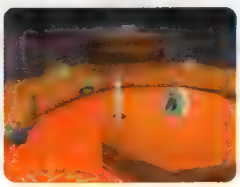
STATION VERDICT

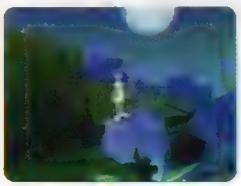
UPS
The closest we carbon-based mortals are likely to get to interacting with Warner Bros' classic characters. Unless you drop acid.

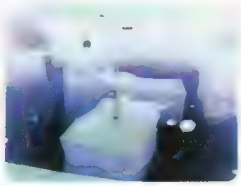
DOWNS
A case of concept over design. So eager were Infogrames to involve the phat-rabbit that the gameplay was left lacking in places

78%

"Think: would you pay 40 quid to control a cartoon when you can watch TV for free?"





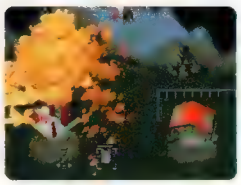


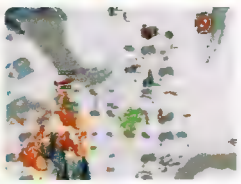
PLATINUM

Command & Conquer: Red Alert

PUBLISHER: Virgin | DEVELOPER: Westwood Studios | RELEASE DATE: Out Now | GAME TYPE: Strategy
NO. OF PLAYERS: 1-2 | PRICE: £19.99 | COMPATIBILITY: Link Cable, Memory Card, Mouse

OPPRESS EUROPE UNDER THE COMMUNIST YOKE FOR THE BARGAIN PRICE OF TWENTY POUNDS.





Command & Conquer is one of a prodigious heritage of strategy titles, each causing unrest and missed social opportunity in gamers worldwide. The megalomaniac that slumbers dormant within us is suddenly fired up like a NASA launch when we play. We have power within our grasp, and avatars willing to follow our commands unto death.

Red Alert, in plot terms, is the antecedent game to *Command & Conquer*, occurring at the time of World War II. The two factions to pick from are the democratic Allieds and the despotic Soviets, the former striving to protect Europe from the reins of the latter. The mission based scenarios add an element of reality into proceedings, allowing you to feel always in pursuit of a tangible goal. Missions nominally assume the 'build base-research-build troops-attack' stratagems of the original game, with diverse objectives sometimes placing you, for example, in command of a single spy attempting to infiltrate a heavily defended garrison, allowing for much-welcomed variety. Research devastating weapons, fight over myriad terrains and harvest Tiberium as you realise that Red Alert, like a noble postman, still delivers. **REFINED BY NICK WHITE**

STATION VERDICT

UPS
The chance to actively participate in military history, whilst teaching the Ruskies a thing or two about manners, eh what?

DOWNS
Same game engine as C&C, with only a few cosmetic variations. Graphics underutilise the capabilities of the PlayStation.

88%

"Immerse yourself in the dualistic fate of Europe with the familiar *C&C* magic."

IMPORT SECTION

If there just aren't enough discs in the mainstream libraries to sate your passion for gaming, where do you turn for satisfaction? One answer seems to the local import stockist. So that you don't end up with a turkey from foreign shores, STATION too devotes a section to games from overseas.

WHAT'S AROUND THIS MONTH?

PROJECKT K
ALL IMPORT GAMES ARE AVAILABLE FROM PROJECT K.
DETAILS AVAILABLE ON PAGE 96

[68] – Mawatte Muchoi

[69] – Rasetsun Sword, Mad Panic Coaster, Exciting Bass

[70] – Cyber Org, Pocket Muu Muu, Kitchen Panic

[71] – Suikaigi, N Gauge Train

WHAT DOES IT MEAN...?

LANGUAGE BARRIER: How easy is it to understand? 100% means it is crystal clear and even your crazy old aunt would understand it; 0% indicates is clear as mud and will make as much sense to the English player as the continuing success of *Blind Date*.

INTERNET: Any sites that feature information or help on this particular game are listed here. Saves you from searching for 'Lightning Slash' and coming up with something extremely pornographic.

ALTERNATIVES: Other similar titles available in good ole Blighty which bear some resemblance to these foreign curiosities, except, er, they're in English.

Mawatte Muchoi

PUBLISHER: Tohokushinsha
DEVELOPER: Inner Brain
RELEASE DATE: Out now
GAME TYPE: Puzzler
NO. OF PLAYERS: 1-2
COMPATIBILITY: Dual Shock Analog, Memory Card

LEFT: Looking like nothing else on Earth (thankfully), the characters are a colourful lot.

STATION VERDICT

LANGUAGE BARRIER: 95%
No discernable problem with this title.
PAL CONVERSION: Unlikely.
INTERNET: N/A

JAP IMPORT **79%**

"Fast and furious brain storming action with cool characters and cheesy music."

IF YOUR IDEA OF A GOOD TIME IS WRESTLING WITH THE INTRICACIES OF MATRIX TRANSPOSITION, CHECK THIS OUT.

ABOVE: The influence of Bomberman is hard to ignore, but fortunately Mawatte Muchoi has a character all of its own.

LEFT: El Kendallo, the Mexican troubadour cunning tries to avoid the evil pumpkin headed villain by singing "Loving You"

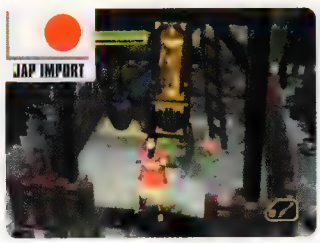
Sometimes you just sit down at your PlayStation and want a game which is challenging but doesn't involve sitting around for 20 minutes while it tells you the story so far and prepares you for action. You want a game you can play instantly, so the classic puzzle title is the obvious choice. Beginning with pioneers such as Bubble Bobble and continuing the tradition with the classic Bomberman series, the genre can now boast a new addition in the bizarre shape of Mawatte Muchoi.

On first look it appears to be just a *Bomberman* clone, but as you attempt to make your first move, you realise that there is more to this than meets the eye. The idea is to sprint around the screen, dodging the nasty orbs and evil pumpkins. Yet to do this you must move the ground itself to make a path to the treasure chests dotted in various locations. Transporter pyramids make your task easier, but frantic arcade thrills are assured as the floor spins the wrong way and it is GAME OVER.

Quirky characters include a super deformed knight, a Mexican (complete with guitar), and the obligatory girly with big eyes and pink outfit. Highly recommended for puzzle fanatics.

PONDERED AND SOLVED BY KENDALL LACEY

ALTERNATIVES: There are some worthy alternatives to try out before importing. See *Bomberman* or *Yo Yo's Puzzle Park*.



Rasetsun Sword

PUBLISHER: Konami
DEVELOPER: In-House
RELEASE DATE: Out now
GAME TYPE: RPG/Slash 'em-up
NO. OF PLAYERS: One
COMPATIBILITY: Dual Shock Analog, Memory Card

THE SAMURAI: LIVES BY HONOUR, KILLS BY STEALTH, EATS RAW FISH IN SEAWEED.

Feudal Japan is never a quiet locale. Torn apart by wars caused by atavistic rulers, the fate of whole cities often lay in the hands of lone samurai. Fans of the seminal Seventh Samurai will also attest to the fact that Samurai never uttered clichés such as 'Hah, your kung-fu is good, mine is better!'.

Rasetsun Sword is a hybrid of a game, integrating elements of traditional RPG and scrolling beat 'em-up, one section invariably leading to another. As far as I could work out, the plot centres upon your efforts to purge feudal Japan from corruption and evil. The choice of protagonists is limited to two, an enigmatic samurai and a svelte female ninja. Graphically, the game is akin to *Resident Evil*, with polygonal characters roaming around impressive pre-rendered backdrops. Progress is impeded by my inability to comprehend Japanese, as all conversation takes place in the mother tongue. Best avoided unless you have a degree in Japanese or money to burn.

SLASHED TO PIECES BY NICK WHITE

ALTERNATIVES: The combat element is reminiscent of *Bushido Blade* or *Tenchu*, with *Final Fantasy VIII*-style RPG sections.

STATION VERDICT

LANGUAGE BARRIER: 20%
All text is in Japanese.
PAL CONVERSION: Unlikely in the West.
INTERNET: www.konami.com

JAP IMPORT **71%**

"A tidy fusion of realtime combat and RPG. Would make an impressive UK release."

Exciting Bass

CAST YOUR LINE AND YOU'RE FEELING FINE...

PUBLISHER: Konami
DEVELOPER: KCE Osaka
RELEASE DATE: Out Now
GAME TYPE: Fishing Sim
NO. OF PLAYERS: One
COMPATIBILITY: Memory Card

ABOVE: Caption Caption Caption Caption Caption Caption Caption Caption Caption

Many sports seem to scream out for their own games, but fishing has never seemed to be near the top of the list. Well fear not, angling fanatics, for your prayers have now been answered and the result is more interesting than you might have imagined. The scenario of the game is simple, choose your bait, throw the line into the lake and wait until a fish grabs hold of it. Then, by bashing the buttons as instructed, you can pull the creature out of the water and you will be shown just how magnificent or useless your catch is. Play in arcade or tournament mode and smile wryly to yourself that such a strange game can be so appealing. **CAUGHT BY** KENDALL LAGGY

ALTERNATIVES: A bucketload in Japan, but none over here (except for on the Game Boy Color).

STATION VERDICT

LANGUAGE BARRIER: 70% – Probably provided some instructions which I missed.
PAL CONVERSION: I wouldn't of thought so.
INTERNET: N/A

JAP IMPORT **75%**

"Interesting and original idea with much to keep you amused"

Mad Panic Coaster

PUBLISHER: Hakuhodo
DEVELOPER: In House
RELEASE DATE: Out Now
GAME TYPE: Rollercoaster Sim
NO. OF PLAYERS: One
COMPATIBILITY: Memory Card

CANDY FLOSS, COCONUTS AND BEER SWIGGING GYPSIES

Original genres are generally hard to discover/invent, with each successful game spawning a sickening number of inferior facsimiles. Very occasionally something totally different appears, making you shout 'WHAT???' very loudly.

Welcome to the world's first PlayStation rollercoaster simulator putting you, literally, in the driving seat of a kaleidoscopic cutesy 'coaster car, your only aim to keep it on the tracks. Sometimes your way will be blocked by either skulls, fairground horses or strange zombie creatures. The cart gets faster and faster making control incredibly difficult, but you are armed with what appear to be basketballs to destroy the enemies, as well as the ability to jump over them. Fast arcade action, sure, but basic graphics and samey gameplay make this one for aficionados only.

THROWN UP BY KENDALL LAGGY

ALTERNATIVES: I can confidently say there are no PSX rollercoaster titles available in this country...

STATION VERDICT

LANGUAGE BARRIER: 90%
No significant dialogue problems, no dialogue!
PAL CONVERSION: No.
INTERNET: http://www.aiai.com/~freddy/animepsx/

JAP IMPORT **60%**

"Swift arcade action, but very limited gameplay and graphics."

Cyber Org

PUBLISHER: Squaresoft
DEVELOPER: Fuzzbox
RELEASE DATE: Out now
GAME TYPE: Action Adventure
NO. OF PLAYERS: One
COMPATIBILITY: Memory Card

TRAPPED WITH ONLY EVIL ALIENS FOR COMPANY? AGAIN?

Space, the final frontier, these are the clichés of the starship STATION review. It's not just lazy journalist nicking someone else's tag line, it is the perfect way to illustrate where this game gets its inspiration from, namely all the big science fiction movies... ever!

Its nearest cinematic twin would be the *Alien* series, as Cyber Org finds you wandering around a dark claustrophobic spaceship and occasionally discovering creatures of a less than friendly nature. Doors around the craft remain locked until you have destroyed the enemy, either by blasting them or giving them a swift kicking until they shrivel to nothing. This means you cannot run away like a girly, you must fight everything that gets in your way. The problem with the game for English players is that you must also interact with computer systems to get information crucial to your mission, and without this the Western player will miss out on a lot. Sci-fi fans may want to buy Japanese dictionaries now, the rest of us should stick to movies. **BLASTED BY** KENDALL LACEY

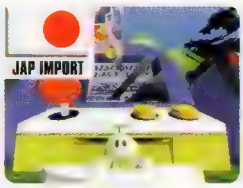
ALTERNATIVES: A good choice would be *Alien Trilogy*, for a genuine movie rip off.

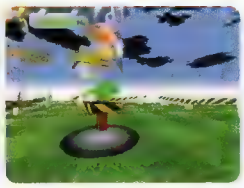
STATION VERDICT

LANGUAGE BARRIER: 50%
Involves interaction with Jap computer terminals.
PAL CONVERSION: Not as far as we know.
INTERNET: N/A

JAP IMPORT **70%**

"intriguing and potentially successful idea, sadly inaccessible to English players."





Pocket Muu Muu

PUBLISHER: Sony Japan
DEVELOPER: Sugar & Rockets
RELEASE DATE: Out now
GAME TYPE: 3D Exploration/PocketStation
NO. OF PLAYERS: One
COMPATIBILITY: Dual Shock Analog, PocketStation

DESTINED TO GIVE MORE POCKET POWER THAN A VIAGRA OVERDOSE.

You're a mechanised rabbit travelling between floating islands. Small creatures resembling palm trees gibber at you in an unintelligible dialect as you attempt to obtain small games from a larger one. Fear not, this is not the latest concept from Giger or William S Burroughs. The truth is far more benign and appears on a PlayStation.

Quite what the ostensible purpose of Pocket Muu Muu is escapes me; not through idiocy on my behalf but due to the surreal nature and language barrier of the game. Wandering around the psychedelic islands and gassing with the mutated life-forms yields one certain thing: confusion. Vendors retail games that can be downloaded to the PocketStation and enjoyed at a later time to suit you; on the toilet being a prime example. Golf, racing and sumo, all are available to download. If this title made any cohesive sense, it would certainly impress thanks to ingenuity and PocketStation compatibility. As it is, I'll return to scratching my head and attempting to extricate some meaning from the zen-like un-reality of Pocket Muu Muu. **FONDLED BY** RICH WHITE

ALTERNATIVES: The closest you'll find this side of narcotics is Jumping Flash, also the unlikely hero of Pocket Muu Muu.

STATION VERDICT

LANGUAGE BARRIER: 20%
All text and instructions are in Japanese.
PAL CONVERSION: Doubtful, sadly.
INTERNET: N/A

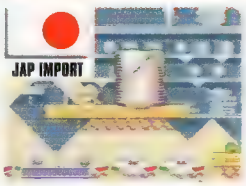
JAP IMPORT **68%**

"is it really worth it to play a few simplistic PocketStation games?"

Kitchen Panic

BEFORE I WAS A JOURNALIST, I WORKED AS A WASHER UP AND EXPERIENCED SOMETHING SIMILAR...

PUBLISHER: Panther
DEVELOPER: In-House
RELEASE DATE: Out now
GAME TYPE: Platformer
NO. OF PLAYERS: One
COMPATIBILITY: Memory Card



My idea of kitchen panic would be arriving home from the pub in a particularly depressed mood and finding there was no drink in the fridge. However, in this game, the term is given a far more DADA-esque interpretation. You must assume the role of a heroic potato who has been called upon to save the kitchen from various perils including the evil Tincans. To do this, you must dodge tin openers and sharp edges in your quest to survive, and collect various vegetables for energy as well as bowls of soup for more points.

It even involves adventures in the sink, where the water pushes you onwards to victory. It is rather surreal seeing the common spud romping around with little trainers on, but the whole experience is enjoyable even though the graphics wouldn't look out of place on the Amiga. Retro platform fun. **COOKED UP BY** KENDALL LACEY

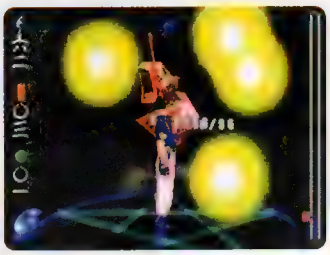
ALTERNATIVES: There's no shortage of platform games to choose from, we'd recommend *Rayman* or any of the *Oddworld* titles.

STATION VERDICT

LANGUAGE BARRIER: 100%
No text, no problem.
PAL CONVERSION: No.
INTERNET: N/A

JAP IMPORT **72%**

"The high point has to be swimming in the sink, which says it all really."

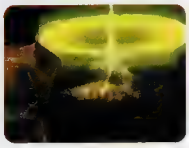


FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Lightning raineth down like a wiggly white scattered outbreak of pain. Put down that golf club, sir!; again the pentagram makes an appearance, second time this issue; seen one floating pink thing, seen 'em all.

Suikaigi

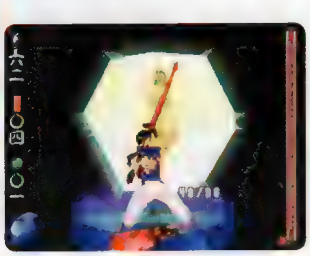
IF YOU LIKE GAMES THAT ARE MORE EPIC THAN A BAG FULL OF DOSTOEVSKY ANTHOLOGIES, THEN LOOK NO FURTHER.

PUBLISHER: Squaresoft
DEVELOPER: Future Media Creators Yukes
RELEASE DATE: Out now
GAME TYPE: Beat 'em-up
NO. OF PLAYERS: One
COMPATIBILITY: Dual Shock Analog, Memory Card



Big of sword and generous of cutscene, the Japanese can't seem to get enough of medievally-themed games with fantasy overtones. With their tastes catalysed by the look and feel of *FVII* into craving anything of this ilk, it could be said that the conservative inclinations this engenders are stunting the Oriental games industry into producing what must be the videogame equivalent of spaghetti western movies. Anyhow their thirst remains unslaked, and thus here we have Suikaigi, an RPG-styled beat 'em-up adventure that has all the long-winded trappings of a far-reaching epic but turns out to be a relatively unsophisticated experience, even with the much-vaunted skills of Squaresoft at the helm. After plenty of unfathomable stat-juggling screens the action kicks in at a leafy glen, with badly pixelated trees and a basically-hewn landscape stalked by what seems to be a cross between a fish and a stomach with teeth. Your long-limbed hero (I couldn't seem to access the other characters in the intro movie) can slash and leap with the best of them, with a few nifty mid-air flip moves and numerous sword-swipe fireworks and charge attacks. As the foes come from all around its a tad difficult to keep track, thanks to the flattering view it presents of the hero but not a lot else. It all seems a touch cobbled together and certainly doesn't suggest there's anything too marvellous to come if you bother to play through any further. The debilitating spell of pretension hangs over too many games in this style, dressing up simplistic ideas as something greater than they are just for the sake of form. Get a life (and some style), we say. **ROLES PLAYED BY** CHRISTIAN SLATER

ALTERNATIVES: *Tenchu* has all the good bits without any of the long-winded RPG guff on top.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Mr Silky White trousers puts the hex on his ghastly opponent; a sorceror, well, it's an RPG, what exactly did you expect?

STATION VERDICT

LANGUAGE BARRIER: 50%
You can fight but the plot is a mystery.
PAL CONVERSION: Extremely unlikely.
INTERNET: No way, baby.

JAP IMPORT **62%**

"Not much fun at all, seems like a lot of hot air over very little"

N Gauge Train

PUBLISHER: Toshiba EMI
DEVELOPER: In-House
RELEASE DATE: Out now
GAME TYPE: Railway Sim
NO. OF PLAYERS: One
COMPATIBILITY: Memory Card

AT LAST, A VIRTUAL MODEL RAILWAY TO PLAY WITH!

ABOVE: Perhaps it should be titled 'Uncle with OCD sim', or is that just my family?

Ok, trainspotters, an n gauge set is a 1/150th scale model railway set-up, and here it is in all its nerdy glory. Tomy built a huge diorama and placed a camera on the front of the choo-choo to film the action for this title, known in Japan as *Gatan Goton*. Basically you are a train driver and you must keep your vehicle running smoothly, to a timetable shown at the top of the screen. You must stop your train in time to allow all the passengers to alight, without overrunning the platform. You must also watch for signals along the way as well as adhering to all the speed limits along your route. Whilst at first it appears terminally dull, it does have a certain calming effect and is a relaxing alternative to the usual frantic titles. **SPOTTED BY** KENDALL LACEY

ALTERNATIVES: There are thousands in Japan, but none over here.

STATION VERDICT

LANGUAGE BARRIER: 95%
Not much problem here.
PAL CONVERSION: Very unlikely.
INTERNET: N/A

JAP IMPORT **65%**

"Novelty value should make this stand out, perhaps the idea needs some development."

Industry Directory

Your complete guide to getting in touch with the videogames industry...

ACCLAIM	Tel: 0171 344 5000	
Internet:	www.acclaimnation.com	
Helpline:	0891 303330	
ACTIVISION	Tel: 01895 456 700	
Internet:	www.activision.com	
ARGONAUT	Tel: 0181 200 5777	
Internet:	www.argonaut.com	
AGETEC	Tel: 01923 202097	
Internet:	www.agetec-europe.com	
ANCO	Tel: 01322 292 518	
Internet:	www.anco.co.uk	
BULLFROG	Tel: 01483 579 399	
Internet:	www.bullfrog.co.uk	
CAPCOM	No UK offices	
Internet:	www.capcom.com	
	www.capcom.co.jp	
CODEMASTERS	Tel: 01926 814 132	
Internet:	www.codemasters.co.uk	
CORE DESIGN	Tel: 01332 297 797	
Internet:	www.core-design.com	
CRANBERRY SOURCE	Tel: 0181 343 9373	
Internet:	www.cranberry.co.uk	
CRYSTAL DYNAMICS	No UK offices	
Internet:	www.crystald.com	
CTW	Tel: 01462 442 472	
Internet:	www.ctw.co.uk	
DATEL ELECTRONICS	Tel: 01785 810 800	
Internet:	www.datel.co.uk	
DMA DESIGN	Tel: 01382 561 333	
Internet:	www.dma.co.uk	
ELECTRONIC ARTS	Tel: 01753 549 442	
Internet:	www.ea.com	
Helpline:	0891 669944	
	0171 565 7303	
EIDOS	Tel: 0181 636 3000	
Internet:	www.eidos.co.uk	

FIRE INTERNATIONAL	Tel: 01302 325 225	
Internet:	N/A	
GAMESTER/LMP	Tel: 01992 503 133	
Internet:	N/A	
GREMLIN	Tel: 0114 263 9900	
Internet:	www.gremlin.co.uk	
GROLIER	Tel: 01865 264 800	
Internet:	www.grolier.co.uk	
GT INTERACTIVE	Tel: 0171 486 5099	
Internet:	www.gtinteractive.com	
Helpline:	0171 565 7303	
IGUANA ENT.	Tel: 01642 614 000	
Internet:	www.acclaimnation.com	
INTERPLAY	Tel: 01628 423 666	
Internet:	www.interplay.com	
Helpline:	01628 423 723	
JVC	Tel: 0171 240 3121	
Internet:	www.jvc-europe.com	
KONAMI	Tel: 01895 853 000	
Internet:	www.konami.com	
	www.konami.co.jp	
LOGIC 3	Tel: 0181 900 0024	
Internet:	N/A	
LUCASARTS	No UK offices	
Internet:	www.lucasgames.com	
MAXIS	Tel: 0171 505 1500	
Internet:	www.maxis.com	
MIDWAY	No UK offices	
Internet:	www.midway.com	
MINDSCAPE	Tel: 01444 246 333	
Internet:	N/A	
NAMCO	Tel: 0171 734 7737	
Internet:	www.namco.com	
	www.namco.co.uk	
NAUGHTY DOG	No UK offices	
Internet:	www.naughtydog.com	

OCEAN/INFOGRAMES	Tel: 0161 827 8000	
Internet:	www.infogrames.co.uk	
PROBE	Tel: 0181 680 4142	
Internet:	www.probe.co.uk	
PSYGNOSIS	Tel: 0151 282 3000	
Internet:	www.psygnosis.com	
SCi	Tel: 0171 585 3308	
Internet:	www.sci.co.uk	
SHINY	No UK offices	
Internet:	www.shiny.com	
SONY COMPUTER ENT.	Tel: 0171 911 8700	
Internet:	www.playstation.co.uk	
Helpline:	0881 505 505	
SQUARESOFT	No UK offices	
Internet:	www.squaresoft.com (USA)	
	www.square.co.jp (Japan)	
TAKE 2 INT.	Tel: 0171 3847500	
Internet:	www.take2games.com	
TELSTAR	Tel: 01932 22223	
Internet:	www.telstar.co.uk/tes/index.htm	
THQ	Tel: 01483 767 656	
Internet:	www.thq.com	
TITUS	Tel: 0171 700 2119	
Internet:	www.titusgames.com	
UBI SOFT	Tel: 0181 944 9000	
Internet:	www.ubisoft.com	
VIRGIN	Tel: 0171 368 2255	
Internet:	www.vie.co.uk	

Try to make your calls to companies pertinent and only call with problems after you have read the manual throughly. If you've exhausted your options and explored every avenue, then you've every right to call the company about your software. After all, if you'd bought anything else off a company and you had a question, they'd be happy to help!

THE eDGE

In order that you get your full money's worth from a game, sometimes you have to resort to alternative methods for inspiration. We understand this. That's why, every month we give you the eDGE, providing tips, walkthroughs and secret features. Oh yes, and cheats.

CHEATS FOR:

BUST–A–MOVE 4 • GTA: MISSION PACK 1, LONDON 1969 • LIVE WIRE

NBA LIVE '99 • TWISTED METAL 3 • V2000
SPYRO THE DRAGON • DEVIL DICE

T'AI FU: WRATH OF THE TIGER • TRIPLE PLAY 2000
RUNNING WILD • KKND KROSSFIRE

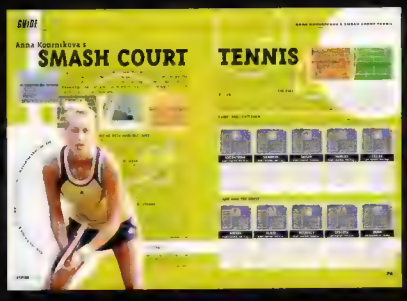
WILD ARMS • GEX: DEEP COVER GECKO • ARMY MEN 3D

XPLORER & DATEL CODES:

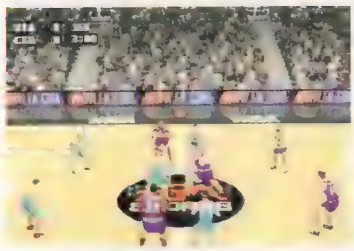
HUNDREDS OF CODES FOR THE BLAZE & DATEL CARTRIDGES

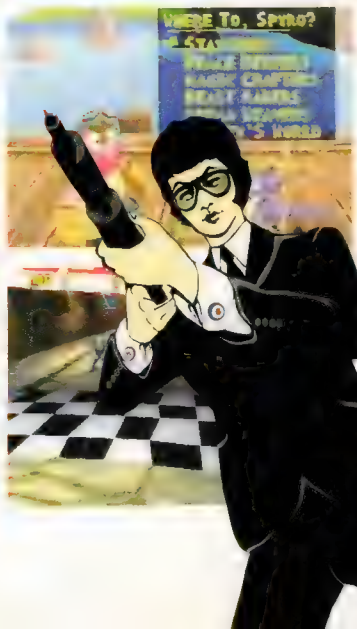
SOLUTIONS TO:

ANNA KOURNIKOVA'S SMASH COURT TENNIS
TANK RACER • CIVILIZATION II



BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY





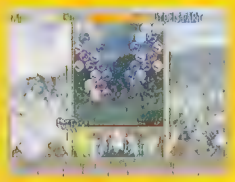
BUST-A-MOVE 4

More fiendish than ever, BAM4 should keep you occupied for months to come. If, however, you feel the need to extend its longevity, there are a few hiden extras just waiting to unlocked.

Extra Puzzle Sets

Enter one of the following codes on the title screen. A small face will appear in the bottom right of the screen to confirm correct code entry. Select puzzle mode then the 'Arcade' option to access more puzzles.

Set 1 ●, ←, →, ←, ●
Set 2 ■, ▲, ✕, ■, ▲
Set 3 ▲, ←, →, ▲
Set 4 ←, ▲, ▲, →



Hidden Characters

Press →, →, →, ●, ←, ←, ← on the title screen.

Character Select

Press →, →, ●, ←, ← on the title screen.

Tarot Mode

Press ↑, ●, ↓, ●, ↑ at the title screen. A tarot reading selection will now be available at the options screen.

Talk Demo Mode

Enable the 'Hidden characters' and 'Tarot reading mode' codes then press ■, ↑, ←, ↓, →, ↑, ■, ↓, ←, ↑, →, ↓, ■ at the title screen. A sound will confirm correct code entry. A talk demo selection will now be available at the options screen.

LIVE WIRE

Combined with the rather exorbitant graphics and colour scheme, the difficult level structure of this title may make your head ache. Never fear, there is a handy level skip...

Level Select

Hold ● and press ←, ↓, ↑, →, ← at the level selection screen. Press ↑ or ↓ to choose a new starting level on any world.

GTA: MISSION PACK 1, LONDON 1969

Once you've tackled arson, car theft, burglary, armed robbery, grand larceny, first degree murder, treachery, double dealing and gang warfare, there's only one way crime left to commit. Cheat, of course.

Cheat Codes

Enter one of the following as player names at the character screen to activate the corresponding cheats. Use the rename command to enter multiple codes or to enter a regular name after all codes are entered.

HAROLDHAND
All levels , all weapons, 'Get Out of Jail Free' card, armour, co-ordinates, 9,999,990 points, 5x multiplier, no cops, 99 lives.

GETCARTER
All levels, all weapons, 'Get Out of Jail Free' card, armour, co-ordinates, 5x multiplier, 99 lives, maximum wanted level.

TOOLEDUP
All weapons, 'Get Out of Jail Free' card, armour.

FREEMANS
All levels, all weapons, 'Get Out of Jail Free' card, armour, 5x multiplier.

DONTMESS
All weapons, 'Get Out of Jail Free' card, armour.

SORTED
All levels, all infinite weapons, 'Get Out of Jail Free' card, and armour.

RAZZLE
All levels.

PENTHOUSE
London levels 1 through 3.

MAYFAIR
London levels 1 and 2.

GRASS
No cops.

SIDEBURN
5x multiplier.

MCVICAR
99 lives.

BIGBEN
9,999,990 points.

SWEENEY
Co-ordinates.

DLOBILL
Maximum wanted level.

READERWIFE
All levels.

Crawl Under Fences:

Take a vehicle that you can crawl under and park it next to a fence. Go to the back and press r to crawl under. Make sure you can get back though!

NBA LIVE '99

Ball bouncin', rim ridin' and pump squeakin' action, but in an all new '99 form! An EA game just wouldn't be an EA game without a batch of cheats to bolster the longevity, so here's a load to stuff in yer grey box...

Extra Teams

Enter the 'Rosters' screen and select the 'Create Custom Team' option and enter one of the following cities and team names.

CITY	TEAM NAME
Hitmen	Coders
Hitmen	Earplugs
Hitmen	Idlers
Hitmen	Rebounds
Hitmen	Pixels

Easy Points

Pause the game and press →, ●, ●, ←, ●. A sound will confirm correct entry. The home team will have 100 points when game play is resumed.

Extra Speed

Pause the game and press ←, →, ●, ●, ●. The crowd will cheer to confirm correct entry.

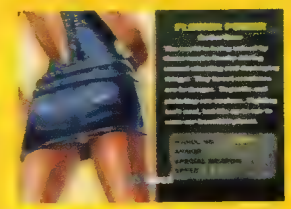
TWISTED METAL 3

Tougher than the new driving test, this game also involves high speed motorway driving, but at least you won't have to reverse park. If you're having difficulty on the violent highways of the future, here's a few codes to help you along.

Passwords Codes

Enter any of the following codes as a password to get the desired effect.

←, ○, ○, ○, ←	Alternate Flower Power outfits.
△, ○, ↑, →, ↓	Unlimited ammo.
R2, ○, ✕, R1, START	Invincibility.
△, ○, ↓, ←, ↑	More powerful weapons.
←, →, ←, →, ↑	Giant ricochet bomb.
△, ←, ↓, →, ↑	Smart seekers.
△, ↑, ○, →, START	99 freeze missiles.
SELECT, SELECT, R2, L2, START	No power ups.
SELECT, L1, SELECT, START, ○	No health power ups.
L1, START, START, START, R1	No full healths.
↓, L1, ↓, START, △	CPU cars ignore health power ups.
↑, ↑, ✕, ✕, ↑	Ice levels.
START, R1, L1, START, START	All power ups are homing missiles.
START, START, L1, L2, L1	All power ups are napalms.
START, L1, START, L1, START	All power ups are power missiles.
↑, ↓, ↑, ↓, ↑	Homing rain missiles.
L1, R2, L2, R1, R2	CPU kills humans.
✕, ○, ○, ○, ○	Solo deathmatch.
L2, L2, R2, R1, R1	Unlimited specials after dying.
R1, R2, L1, L2, L1	Super napalms.



Extra Levels

Enter the following codes as passwords to select the required level. Input the codes then start a deathmatch game and choose any level and vehicle.

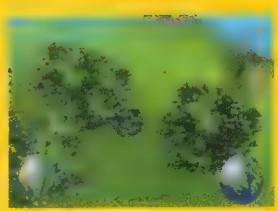
○, ○, ○, ←, ←	Warehouse.
↑, ↑, ↑, ←, ←	Demo level.
←, ←, ←, ○, ○	Club Kid's house level.

Extra Characters

←, ←, ←, →, →	Play as Minion in any mode.
→, →, →, ←, ←	Play as Sweet Tooth in any mode.

V2000

This didn't quite capture the public imagination in the way that developer David Braben hoped, but still remains a tough challenge none the less. Help is at hand.



Cheat Mode

Whilst playing the game hold R1 and press ←, ←, ○, ○, R2, →, △, R2 – a sound confirms correct entry. Pause the game and move to the bottom of the options menu to find a cheat selection.

SPYRO THE DRAGON

If a certain dragon is getting you hot under the collar, try this...

99 Lives

Whilst playing press START and go to the inventory screen. Press ○, ○, ○, ○, ○, ○, ○, ↑, ○, ←, ○, →, ○ and you'll get 99 lives.

Access All Worlds

Whilst playing press START and go to the inventory screen. Press ○, ○, ○, ○, ←, →, ←, →, ○, ↑, →, ↓ and you'll get access to all worlds.

XPLORER
THE ULTIMATE CHEAT CARTRIDGE

For more info on the Xplorer codes, call the codes hotline on: 01302 325860 or visit the Xplorer website at: www.x-plorer.co.uk

ACE COMBAT 2
Infinite Missiles
86582394595A
Infinite Fuel
8657EC64695A
8657EC62755C
No Damage
865823285A9A
86582326755C
8657ECCC5A9A
8657ECCA755C

ALL STAR TENNIS '99
No Points P1
36734C7A595A
No Points P2
36734C79595A

APOCALYPSE
Level Select
366350185959
Debug Mode
3663501C5959
Invincible
366350FC5959
Infinite Lives
366350005959
All Weapons / Infinite Ammo
366350F85959
Hide Weapon & Health Meter
36635004595A
Infinite Smart Bombs
86592A08596
86592A06755C
86592F705961
86592F6E755C
Infinite Energy
86593524595A
86593522595A

ASTEROIDS
Play As Excalibur
366152A0595B
Infinite Lives
36655F185964

A-TRAIN
Unlimited money
3660866459F2
3660866635914
366086625939
3660B661595C

BLAST RADIUS
ALWAYS ACTIVATE THE NEXT ONE OR THE GAME WON'T

BOOT!!
Kill Xplorer Check
7658a37a 65a9
5658a37c 5956
f684000c 0000
The following codes can be Switched on or off.
Unlimited Shield
36644138 599c
Unlimited Energy
36644136 5998
Unlimited Fuel
36642a4a 599a
100,000 Credits
86642af8 d7fa
86642af6 5959
Unlimited Ammo
3664413e 5960
No Overheating
8660010a 595a

BLOODY ROAR
Infinite Energy
Player 1
68565758 597f
f800198 ea80
ffffffff 0038
8040801f 1a3c
98015a37 0000
40a780ea 1a3c
00389a40 0070
1a400000 0000
04005a27 0800
40031000 0042
Play as Uriko
h6555768 5a5a
16734edc 5962

A BUG'S LIFE
Infinite Lives and 50 Grain
866089988856
All F.L.I.K. Letters Collected
866089965956
Always Have Gold Berry
8660898A5C5A
Infinite Health
3660898C5956

CIRCUIT BREAKERS
Always Finish 1st
765C7C407756
865C7C407556
Start On Last Lap
7658FCDE855C
8658FCE05959
Infinite Power-Ups Player 1
865C5760595A
673E4C8594F
865A5760595A
1673E408594F
Infinite Power-Ups Player 2
865C5760595A
1673E208594F
865A5760595A
1673E218594F
Infinite Power-Ups Player 3
865C5760595A
673E8E8594F
865A5760595A
1673E828594F
Infinite Power-Ups Player 4
865C5760595A
1673E6F8594F
865A5760595A
1673E638594F
Unlock All Tracks
86985756595A
1671EC685A59

CARDINAL SYN
Unlock All Characters
86685756595A
1674D1605A5A

CHILL
Infinite Checkpoint Time
865DEA50895A
365DEA4E595F
Time Always 5 Sec
865DE8A01CAA
Have 750,000 Points
8665884CCA0A
3665884A5962
Unlock All Tracks
365EF391598F
365EF398595B
Unlock Yeti
365EF3925959

COOL BOARDERS 2
All Characters
3659cb98 594f
All Boards
3659cb96 594f
Have Trophies For All Races
3659cba0 594f
3659cb9e 594f
3659cba4 594f

BY ANY MEANS NECCESARY

For more info on the Action Replay codes, call the codes hotline on: 01785 810800 or visit the Datel website at: www.datel.co.uk

ABE'S EXODDUS
Infinite rocks
(Turn off action replay when in game)
801F36E6 02FF

ACTUA GOLF 2
Always hole in one
3018E368 0000

BATMAN AND ROBIN
BATMAN:
Infinite health
800CF506 0064
8009AB78 0000
8009AB7A 0000
Infinite health Batmobile
801E312E 00FA
800D0710 00FA
Maximum abilities
800CF4FF 0096
800CF500 0096
800CF501 0096
800CF4FC 0096
Have all tools/weapons
800CF50A 0F0F
800CF50C FFFF
800CF508 FFFF
ROBIN:
Infinite health
800CF5C6 0064
8009AB78 0000
8009AB7A 0000
Infinite health for Redbird
801E312E 00FA
800D0710 00FA
Maximum abilities
800CF5BE 0096
800CF5C0 0096
800CF5C1 0096
800CF5BC 0096
Have all tools/weapons
800CF5CA 0F0F
800CF5CC FFFF
800CF5C8 FFFF
Batgirl:
Infinite health
800CF566 0064
8009AB78 0000
8009AB7A 0000
Infinite health for Batcycle
801E312E 00FA
800D0710 00FA
Maximum abilities
800CF55F 0096
800CF560 0096
800CF561 0096
800CF55C 0096
Have all tools/weapons
800CF56A 0F0F
800CF56C FFFF
800CF568 FFFF

BIO F.R.E.A.K.S
Extra health P1
8009B2A0 00AF
8009D570 6400
Infinite sheild P1
8009D574 6400
Constant sheild P1
8009D580 0027
One hit wins P1
8009B2A4 0002
8009D8E4 0200
8009D8E8 0200
Extra health P2
8009B2A4 00AF
8009D8E4 6400
Infinite sheild P2
8009D8E8 6400
Constant shield P2
8009D8F4 0022
One hit wins P2
8009B2A0 0002
8009D570 0200
8009D574 0200
Infinite jet pack P1
8009D578 3200
Infinite jet pack P2
8009D8EC 3200
Rapid fire P1
80090628 0000
Rapid fire P2
8009DC9C 0000

BOMBERMAN WORLD
Invincibility
D00CCAE2 0000
800CCAE2 2000
Infinite lives
800CC850 0009
Stop timer
80077B82 003B
Have all crystals
D0077B02 0004
80077B00 0004
D0077B02 0006
80077B00 0006
D0077B02 0005
800778D0 0005
Maximum bombs
800CC804 000A
Maximum fire
800CC852 000A

BLASTO
Infinite lives
801F145E 0005
Infinite energy
801EFFC8 1770

BUSHIDO BLADE
Enable all movies
800A14D0 FFFF
Stop continue timer
800A14B4 011F
Extra character (Vs)
80030BE6 1062

CARDINAL SYN
Sudden Death
801946bc 0000
801946be 0000

CASPER
Please note health codes will only work on 2.2 or equaliser
Infinite health
D21FBD84 0020
801FBD84 01F4
Infinite fools gold
8007E84C 00FF
Infinite iron keys
8007E844 00FF
Infinite brass keys
8007E848 00FF

COLIN MCRAE RALLY
To gain access to all the tracks and all the cars in expert mode.
80010098 FFFF
To end the race and always be in first place.
8007BDF0 0000
8007BDF2 0000
D00CE0E4 0800
800C6C38 02F0
Note 1: This cheat requires that you press the R1 button by itself once during each race. This will then make the game believe that the race has finished. Exactly when you decide to end the race is up to you – if you want to drive through most of the course you can, or you can just finish.

CRASH BANDICOOT 3
Infinite lives
d006efee 0000
80069108 6300
800b5ef8 6300
Have all powers
80069328 003f
Have all gems
80069160 ffff
80069162 ffff

DEVIL DICE

Satan's helpers will invade your sleeping mind if you play this game too long, trust us. For those of you with higher IQs than ours, however, here's the way to open up some new puzzles.

Extra Puzzles
Complete all 100 puzzles in the puzzle mode then highlight the 'Random' selection on the stage selection screen. Press ✕ then use L2 and R2 to select from 1000 other puzzles.

Play Your Own Music
Replace the game disc with a music CD after you reach the menu screen. Then whilst playing press START to change tracks.

Audio Instructions
Press → at the title screen to listen to audio instructions. Keep pressing → after the instructions have finished to return to the main screen. Press → again to hear basic tips.

Gallery
Complete the following goals to unlock the corresponding Gallery

1 to 10	Complete puzzle mode levels 1 to 10.
11	Get a high score in endless mode.
12	Get a high score in endless mode.
13	Get a high score in time limited mode.
14	Get onto the max chain number ranking in time limited mode.

T'AI FU: WRATH OF THE TIGER

Even The Observer commented on the similarity between this big cat's name and a certain well known brand of tea bags. If the even broadsheets have it, then obviousy this line of humour is exhausted and no longer even remotely funny. Although that doesn't stop Kendall from shouting 'It's Greeeaaat!' every time we play.

Cheat Enable
This code must be entered before any of the other codes at the map screen can be activated. At the map screen press R2 △ R2 △ ○ ↓ □.

Level Select
Enter the 'Cheat Enable' code. Then at the map screen press R2 △ R2 △ ○ □ ↓ △ ↑ → ← ↓ ↑ L1.

Longer Flights
After learning the crane style, you can fly really far by rapidly pressing the Jump button. This will carry you further than simply holding the button down.

Story/Style Select
Enter the 'Cheat Enable' code. Then at the map screen, press R2 △ R2 △ □ ○ ↓ △ ↑ ← → ↓ ↑ L1.

View Ending
Enter the 'Cheat Enable' code. Then at the map screen, press R2 △ R2 △ ↓ □ ○ △ ↑ ↓ ← → ↑ R2.

TRIPLE PLAY 2000

A new baseball game, yawn! But wait, this one is actually half decent. To quote the cliché: easy to play hard to master. Now you can get a home run every time with a bit of cheating, plus mess about with the camera. What fun!

Automatic Homer
When batting, hold all four shoulder buttons and press △ □ △ ○ ✕ □ ← →.

Camera Control
While playing, hold all four shoulder buttons and press → ← ↑ ↓ → ←.
To move the camera use the following controls...

- R1 + Directional buttons turn the camera.
- L1 + Directional buttons make the camera move faster.
- L2 zooms out.
- R2 zooms in.
- △ sets a high view.
- □ sets a low view.

RUNNING WILD

If you're more Play-Doh than Seb Coe then here's a few tips on finishing first in Running Wild. There are more shortcuts than are listed here however...

Shortcut In Lava Level

A short way after the finish line there is a hole all the way over to your right just after you jump over all of the lava pits. Run onto the last booster before the hole in the wall and jump into it. This hole cuts across part of the level.

Shortcut In Jungle

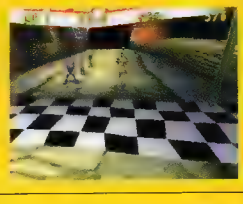
Jump through right next to the final waterfall in the Jungle to find yourself at the finish line.

Shortcut On Moon

The shortcut is directly after the split tunnel starts on your left. Run to your right, then jump at the wall on your left after you pass the ramp.

Alternate Uniforms

To change your uniform colour press L1 or R1 when choosing a character.



WILD ARMS

A full solution would take up most of this mag, but there are a few things we can tell you.

255 Item Trick

Perform the following actions during any round of a battle...

1. Use the Heal Berry with the first person to attack.
2. Have the second person to attack also use a Heal Berry.
3. With the third person, swap any item you have with one of the Heal Berries, then attack as normal.

Note: This trick only works as long as you don't win before the above steps are completed. If you do win beforehand you will lose the item.

Fun Things In Surf Village

Throw the chicken near Tony's house, it will turn into a Light Shroom (cures Flash) if you throw the right one.

Bomb or Punch Tony's dog to get him to chase after you.

Temple Of Memory

The password for the Memory Temple is 'Emiko'.

Two Player Battles

During a battle insert a second controller into slot two, and the person with the second controller can use the characters.

ARMY MEN 3D

'I've conquered worlds!' Or so the advert ran. Now you can conquer a kitchen, the back yard and the front hall (amongst other things).

All weapons:

Pause the game and quickly press ⊙, ⊙, R2, L1, R1, R2. Sarge will now be able to access all the weapons during the present level. Alternatively, pause game play and press R2, R1, R2 + R2 within two seconds.

Invincibility:

Pause the game and quickly press ⊙, ⊙, R2, R1, R2. Sarge will be now invincible during the present level. Alternatively, pause game play and press L1, L1 + L2 within two seconds.

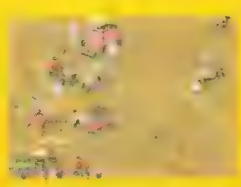
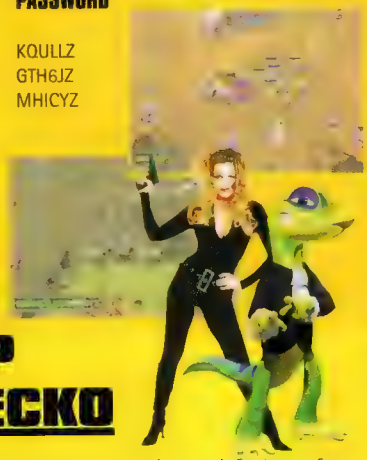
Level select:

At the main menu, quickly press ⊙, △, R2, L2, L1 + R2.

KKND KROSSFIRE

To complement our basic guide a couple of issues ago, here's a couple of level codes to help you further in your quest to KKND.

MISSIONS	LEVEL	PASSWORD
Evolved	End	KQULLZ
Survivor	End	GTH6JZ
Series 9	7	MHICYZ

GEX: DEEP COVER GECKO

It appears the complete walkthrough last issue wasn't enough for some of you...

Invincibility

Pause the game then hold L2 and press ↓↑←←⊙→↓. A sound will confirm correct code entry.

Gex Quotes

Pause the game then hold L2 and press ↓→←⊙↑→. A sound will confirm correct entry. Resume the game and press SELECT to hear Gex make a comment.

Debug Menu

Pause the game then hold L1 (or R1) and press ↑⊙→↑←→↓. Resume the game and press SELECT to display a debug menu. Options include a level select, sound adjust, collectibles plus more.

Vault codes

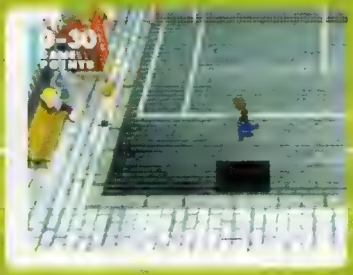
Once in the vault enter the following codes as passwords.

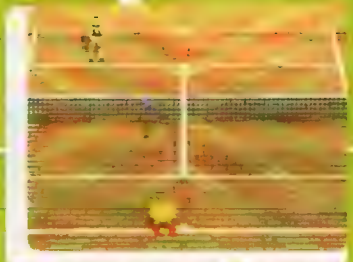
EIGHT HIT PAWS	Square, Diamond, Triangle, Triangle, Star, Diamond
EXTRA LIFE	Triangle, Circle, Star, Square, Square, ⊗
TEN LIVES	Square, ⊗, Circle, Circle, Triangle, Square
INVINCIBILITY	Square, Star, Triangle, Square, Triangle, Diamond
PLAY AS ALFRED	Square, ⊗, Triangle, Square, Star, Star
PLAY AS CUZ	Square, Diamond, Square, Square, Triangle, Diamond
PLAY AS REX	Square, Star, Star, Square, Triangle, Triangle
VIEW FMV 1	Circle, Triangle, Square, Star, Diamond, Star
VIEW FMV 2	Diamond, Star, Square, ⊗, Triangle, Circle
VIEW FMV 3	⊗, Diamond, Star, Triangle, Triangle, Circle
VIEW ALL FMV	Star, ⊗, ⊗, Circle, Square, Triangle
LEVEL SELECT	Square, Circle, Circle, Triangle, ⊗, ⊗
GEX QUOTES	Square, Triangle, ⊗ Star, Square, ⊗ Press SELECT to hear various comments from Gex.
DEBUG MENU	Square, Square, Diamond, Circle, ⊗ ⊗. Press SELECT to enter the debug menu.

Anna Kournikova's

SMASH COURT

Regular readers of STATION will know that we have been consistently impressed with this title in all of its guises. Just so that you can get the most out of it too, here's a little coaching session to pass on our knowledge and experience, garnered through many late nights of centre court action, if you know what we mean.





"How you hit the ball is important as it will maximise shot success."

HIT ME WITH YOUR BEST SHOT

If, like me, you normally find the old grey matter bubbling over as it strains to memorise the button commands in the majority of sports sims, you'll be delighted to find that operating your character has been kept simplistic and that, once mastered, the shots (should) come naturally. These buttons are the default settings, which seemed the easiest to use.

⊗ - WEAK

Despite a name suggesting a feeble shot, to be used by accident only, it is far from useless. It keeps the bounce slow and low, often fooling players anticipating a strong shot. It can be beneficial when returning service as it slows down the play, allowing you to position yourself for the next shot. Particularly effective used on the lawn court of Great Britain, since the bounce is pretty much non-existent here anyway, the weak shot keeps the ball so low upon contact that it can be extremely difficult to return. Wise to use when you're in a position where a strong shot might put the ball out.

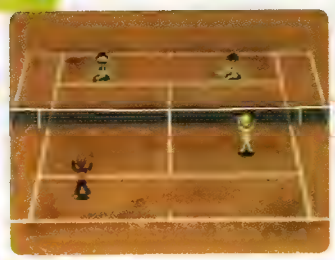
⊙ - STRONG

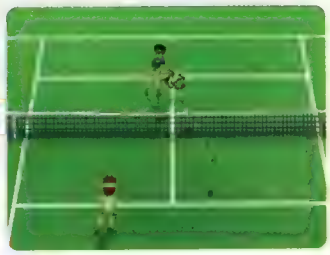
The best shot to use when serving. It moves the ball at a rapid pace, not allowing much reaction time from your opponent. When played close to the net it produces some fast return shots and the thoroughly satisfying smash. On hitting the court the ball will bounce away quickly. Evading those outstretched arms. It's tempting at first to use just this shot, but be careful, as you'll just keep knocking the ball out and give away points.

⊡ - SUPER

Once mastered, this shot is a powerful ally indeed. It's wise to play it when on the baseline only, as it takes a few seconds to wind up for it. Once triggered to play, your player is frozen to the spot and takes slightly

TENNIS





longer to recover after playing it. This makes it extremely tricky if your opponent manages to return. With this in mind, keep a close watch on them. If you see them powering up, get ready to return it almost as quickly as the ball's reached them. Returning the shot successfully is as, if not more, effective as playing the shot itself.

△ – LOB

Best used to lift the ball over the head of those annoying net players. Ensure you're near the baseline when playing, however, otherwise you'll find the ball being smashed back to you, making it difficult to return. When you're feeling a bit shaky and don't want to risk an annoying double fault, the lob is also a handy automatic serve.

THE BALL

Not a shot as such, but certainly an integral part of the game. How you hit the ball is important as it will maximise shot success. Hit the ball just before or after it bounces for a harder, faster shot. Hitting the ball in mid-flight, before it bounces, makes for weaker returns.

Moving into the shot means the ball moves quicker than if you are standing still when it's hit. Positioning yourself well will stop you from stumbling and losing precious seconds whilst recovering. Also judge the bounces well to pre-determine when to strike the ball. The ball physics are all important, so study it well.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN

Before you can hit any balls, you must choose yourself a player. With a whole host of racketeers to pick from, it's all too easy to go for the one with the most aesthetically pleasing physique. Let STATION pick out the five hottest male and female ball handlers so you can start whacking those aces. Of course, it's ladies first...

KOURNIKOVA
Right-Handed. Net Play.

It's her game and she's damned fine at it. Her ball positioning (ooh, matron) is excellent. It's very unusual for her to place the ball on the wrong side of the white line. Complete the game with her and view a sequence of the lady herself.

SUMMERS
Right-Handed. Net Play.

A strong player with a good serve. Her only drawback is that she knocks the ball out of play a little too often, giving away points. Use the weak shot when close to the net.

TAYLOR
Right-Handed. Baseline.

Taylor has the best serve of the female players. Use this to your advantage and finish the games quickly. She has a tendency to play the ball a little too low at times, hitting the net.

JASMINE
Right-Handed. Net Play.

A fast player with a strong smash, use it with the strong shot when the chance is there. Let down only by her weak return shots. Good enough to win the tournaments without much problem.

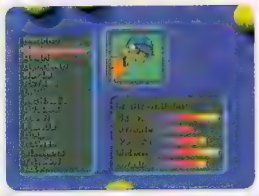
CELINE
Left-Handed. Net Play.

A good player let down by a weak serve. She's fast around the court and lethal when up at the net. Returning some excellent shots with some athletic diving around. Her poor stroke often results in weak returns.

...AND NOW THE GENTS

ROGERS
Right-Handed. Net Play.

His serve, although not the best, is competent. His strong stroke allows for good return play. This, combined with his speed, makes Rogers difficult to beat. Possibly the best of the male players. Closely followed by...



RENZO
Right-Handed. Net Play.

Although his serve is stronger than Rogers', his stroke is weaker. Rogers just pips Renzo to number one spot as most points are won against the computer opponents on the return of serves rather than the serves themselves.

MICHAELS
Right-Handed. Baseline.

This man can really fire his balls. He can also return them at a fair rate of knots. Excellent at serving and his smash can burn right through the opponent's racket. Um, nearly.

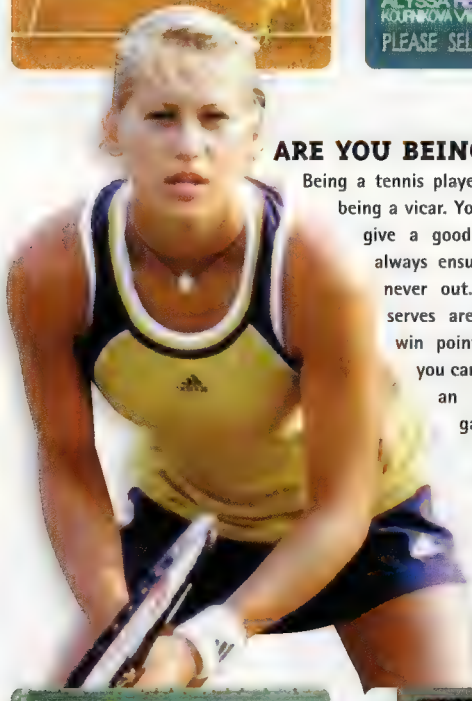
DESOUSA
Left-Handed. Net Play.

A surprisingly good player despite his average statistics. He's like a whippet moving around the court and can return balls with an equal pace. When playing close to the net he really excels himself.

DANN
Left-Handed. All Round.

Another of the elite when it comes to serving, although his other attributes aren't outstanding he's a tough opponent and a good choice to win. A slow stroke means opponents don't have too much difficulty hitting his shots.

ROGERS RENZO CHAN GOODMAN
RURUS PETERS LINN MICHAELS
DESOUBA DANN PIERCE DIAZ
DAVIES EDDY LAMER MAY
ALYSSA REIKO RICHARD JASMINE
KOURNOVA VIKI JORDAN AKIKO
PLEASE SELECT YOUR CHARACTER



ARE YOU BEING SERVED?

Being a tennis player is, at times, a lot like being a vicar. You have to make sure you give a good service and you must always ensure that you're balls are never out. Serving and returning serves are good opportunities to win points quickly. Don't forget you can practice your serves. It's an important part of the game, so learn it well.

It is a rare thing indeed to score an ace against a computer opponent. However, the serve we've detailed for you here will have them flailing helplessly as they watch the ball fly past them and out of reach.

Positioning is all important. Don't leave yourself stranded and unable to return the ball.

Toss the ball into the air using ⊙. As the ball begins its downward trajectory, press ⊙ again. Use the D-pad to alter the ball's power and positioning. eg. ⊙ ↗ ⊙.
As soon as you've served, run to centre court in anticipation of the return.

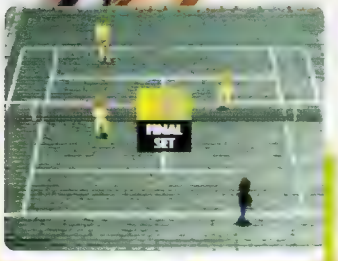
When the ball's returned, use the strong shot and knock it back into the opposite side of the court. Your opponent should be left stranded and you will have won the points. eg. ⊙ ↖.

Returning serves can be tricky as you never know what to expect. Although the two moves we've given below are by no means guaranteed, they work for the most common of the serves. Always be ready for those ace serves that the computer generates at important moments in a game, ie. breakpoint, match point and deuce. These serves are difficult to return if you're not ready. You'll either miss them entirely or manage to scramble to it but be left helpless when the ball's returned to you, way out of reach.

METHOD 1

Don't stand still on the baseline, it makes it difficult to reach the ball in time. Move from side to side in anticipation of the ball's positioning. ← + →.
Play the ball using the weak shot in a straight line, away from the server. ⊗ + ←.

When you've returned the ball, move along the baseline slightly into the court. →.
When the ball's played back to you hit it diagonally, using the strong shot, across the court away from the opponent. ⊙ + ↗.



METHOD 2

Same as the previous serve, keep moving on the baseline. ← + →.

Play the ball back to the server using the strong shot. ⊙ + ↗.
Once the ball's returned, move in a straight line along the baseline. To the centre of the court. →.

When the ball's played back to you, use the strong shot and knock it away from your opponent. ↖ + ⊙.

SO YOU WANNA BE A PLAYER?

As with any sports game there are a million possible ways to play. There is normally one way, however, that is more successful than the others. That is exactly what we've provided for you here.

When involved in a rally, keep playing the ball back to your opponent. Sooner or later they will try to play the ball to one side of you.

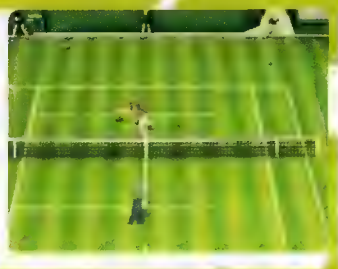
Move to the ball and play it away from your opponent.

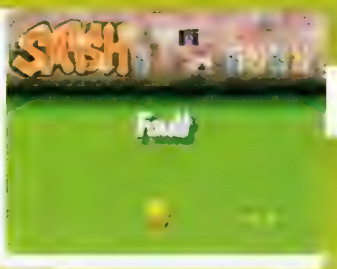
If this doesn't win the point and the ball is played back to you, hold your ground and play the ball back across the court.

SECRET CHARACTERS

Each time you complete one of the four different Street Tournaments, you'll unlock an extra character. Go to the Exhibition character select screen, press SELECT over each player and you should find a new face lurking there somewhere. Here's a list of who to find, where and in what order. Look out for some familiar Namco favourites.

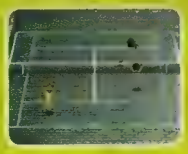
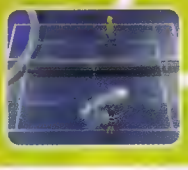
ASAKSA TEMPLE – Celeste, Sasha, Clara, Red Ace, Dragon, Heihachi.
TIMES SQUARE – Peach, Tiffany, Tara, Eddy, Reikon, Pac-Man.
OSAKA BRIDGE – Owen, Acea, Robyn, Lamar, Richard, Troy.
THEME PARK – Xiaomin, Emilie, Sam, Coach, Yoshimitsu, Sherudo.

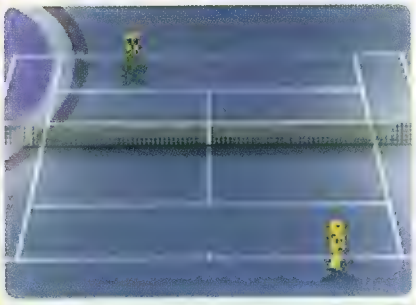




THE COURTS

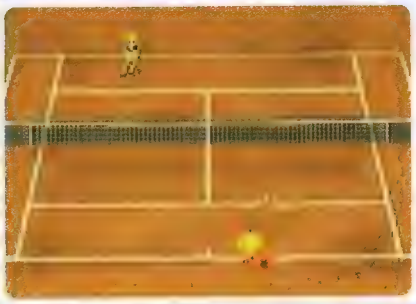
You'll find three different types of surface amongst the courts featured in Smash Court Tennis. These dictate the ball action and influence the speed of the game. All the courts have a hard surface except France and Great Britain.



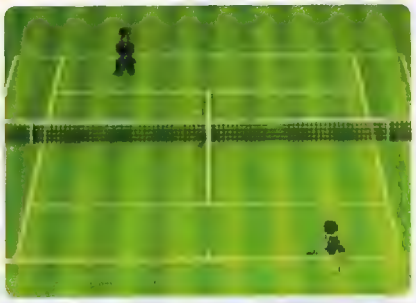
HARD

Playing on these courts makes for a very fast game. The ball bounces high and gains momentum upon hitting the surface. The strong shot is favourable and some good serves are possible. Due to the quick tempo of play on the hard courts, games can be won quickly if played well.



CLAY

The clay court of France reduces the ball speed as soon as it makes contact with the surface. However, the bounce is kept to a medium height which makes it possible to reach shots that would be unreachable on the hard surface courts.



LAWN

As Wimbledon is renowned for being the hardest tennis tournament in the world, I would say the lawn court of Great Britain is rightfully the toughest to triumph on. The ball moves slowly, almost stopping after it's bounced. It can be difficult to judge the bounces after playing on the hard courts. Use the weak shot to your advantage here.

YOU CANNOT BE SERIOUS

Namco are, without a shadow of a doubt, amongst the hierarchy of all things hidden. This game is certainly no exception. Having more surprises than the Kinder Egg Pass the Parcel World Championships to unravel, it'll keep you busy long after you've mastered the game.

HIDDEN EQUIPMENT

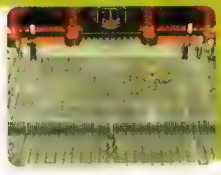
Be the envy of all your friends as you swan into the changing rooms with this little lot stuffed into your sports bag. The equipment doesn't particularly improve the standard of play, it does, however, add an extra dimension to the games. As a victor in the Grand Slam Tournaments you are awarded an extra item of equipment to use in future Tournament games.

GREAT BRITIAN

Fire Racket, Silver Racket, Starburst Racket, Smoking Shoes, Rainbow Racket, Wrestling Mask.

FRANCE

Dynamite Racket, Electric Racket, Frying Pan, Mosquito, Afterimage, Mirage Racket.

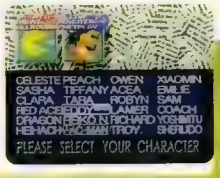


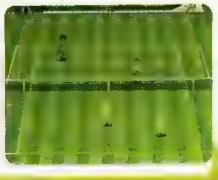
USA

Wave Racket, Cola Bottle, Crimson Racket, Hungry Chick, Footprints, Carrot.

AUSTRALIA

Golden Racket, Tuna Fish, Invisible Ink, Blade Racket, Panda Mask, Football.

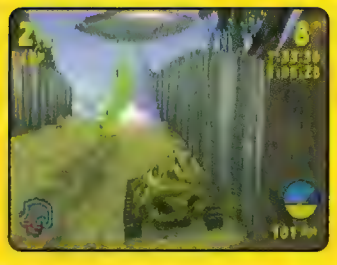




"Returning serves can be tricky as you never know what to expect."

TANKR

Are you fed up with being a general pansy instead of a Panzer General? Do you have aspirations of becoming a chief inside a Chieftain? Is tanking it about in your Mark One the height of your motoring aggression? Then let STATION give you some tip-top tank tips and steer you to becoming a mark one inside your tank. Let's take it to 'em!



On The Right Tracks

With five different tanks to choose from for each of the three cup races it's important to take the top turret that will make tracks to the finish line in first place. Here's the low-down.

BRONZE CUP

MetaCat Radius SRI

TOP SPEED – ★★★
ACCELERATION – ★★
HANDLING – ★★★
GRIP – ★★★

OVERALL – Not a bad little mover. With a little skill applied and a good knowledge of the course layouts it's a good choice to bring you first in the Bronze Cup.

Kyoto Banditos 2.0I

TOP SPEED – ★★★★
ACCELERATION – ★
HANDLING – ★★
GRIP – ★★

OVERALL – Excellent top speed combined with a poor grip means you can drift around the wide corners with ease. This takes a while to master but, when you do, first place will be yours.

EBZ 212 Coupe

TOP SPEED – ★
ACCELERATION – ★★★
HANDLING – ★★★★
GRIP – ★★★

OVERALL – With good handling and grip it's a good choice to learn skills and perfect your cornering techniques. It's not going to win you many races, though.

McCoy Charger GL

TOP SPEED – ★★
ACCELERATION – ★★★★
HANDLING – ★★
GRIP – ★

OVERALL – Handy in tight spots to accelerate away from immediate danger. Far too sluggish to be a race winner though.

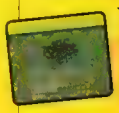
Bonus Tank – NSA Projekt 01

TOP SPEED – ?? ACCELERATION – ??
HANDLING – ?? GRIP – ??

OVERALL – This bonus tank can really shift! It reaches speeds of over 150mph. The handling is smooth and because the grip isn't great it means you can take the corners almost at your leisure.

SILVER CUP

MetaCat LeMans ST



TOP SPEED – ★★★
ACCELERATION – ★★
HANDLING – ★★★
GRIP – ★★★

OVERALL – A little too much speed and grip make this tank much too unresponsive for going around tight corners. The above average stats are misleading and you'll have difficulty navigating yourself into first place. Avoid.

Kyoto Redline 2.8i

TOP SPEED – ★★★★
ACCELERATION – ★
HANDLING – ★★
GRIP – ★★

OVERALL – This tank is simply far too fast to make it around the bumpy, twisting, narrow tracks of the Silver Cup. It bounces out of control constantly and you'll soon find yourself in last place because of its snail-like acceleration.

EBZ Turbo 308

TOP SPEED – ★★
ACCELERATION – ★★
HANDLING – ★★
GRIP – ★★★

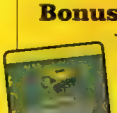
OVERALL – Another poor choice. The grip makes it an effort getting around those tricky bends. When steering into narrow gaps you'll find yourself crashing head on into obstacles, bringing you to a dead stop.

McCoy Fantome RS

TOP SPEED – ★
ACCELERATION – ★★★★
HANDLING – ★★★
GRIP – ★★

OVERALL – This is the one that'll win you the Silver Cup. The light grip, low top speed and high acceleration means you can easily keep full control of the tank whilst comfortably making your way into first position. Pulling away from opponents is easy after any collisions.

Bonus Tank – Duck Feet



TOP SPEED – ?? ACCELERATION – ??
HANDLING – ?? GRIP – ??

OVERALL – This may be the bonus tank but it seems to be a little light on its tracks and slightly too speedy to make the Silver Cup top rankings. You're better off sticking to the not so impressive but largely more competent McCoy tank.

ACER

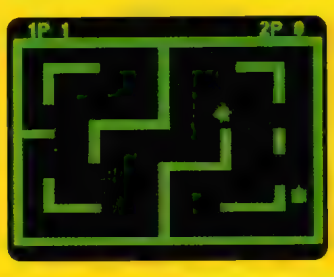
GOING BACK TO MY ROOTS

Those sneaky folk at Glass Ghost have slipped in a few retro treats for all us old timers to enjoy. Take a break from the main game, slap on some Hai Karate and revel in the glory of Ping, Tank 2001 and Space Tank. Oh happy days to be sure.

Ping – Long live the Binatone! Don't laugh kids. This was state of the art in my day. No really, it was.

Tank 2001 – Remember Combat on the Atari 2600? No? Oh. Well it had a mighty tank battling section just like this. Obviously it was much better back then.

Space Tank – Now surely, you must remember Asteroids? What! Blimey, I'm off to apply some anti-ageing cream and watch my Chorlton and the Wheelies videos.



GOLD CUP

MetaCat Viper GT4

TOP SPEED – ★★★
ACCELERATION – ★★
HANDLING – ★★★
GRIP – ★★★

OVERALL – The best all-rounder for the Gold Cup that'll keep you, generally, in the right half of the rankings. The over heavy grip means its progress can be cumbersome around the corners of the more open courses but this is compensated for with comfortable handling around the tighter, narrower tracks. This is your best bet for completing the Gold Cup successfully. You'll still have to race using all your skill and knowledge of the tracks, its no easy ticket to the finish line.

EBZ 720 SLI

TOP SPEED – ★
ACCELERATION – ★★★★
HANDLING – ★★
GRIP – ★★★

OVERALL – The ability to accelerate away neatly from the tight twists and turns stands it in good stead on the narrow, winding courses. It is let down drastically by its poor top speed. Once behind on the more open tracks of the Gold Cup, it's very tricky to catch the leaders.

Kyoto Danzer 3.8i

TOP SPEED – ★★★★
ACCELERATION – ★
HANDLING – ★★
GRIP – ★★★

OVERALL – A poor performer on the narrow tracks due to its high top speed and low acceleration. Great for maintaining speed on the wider, more open courses, though.

McCoy Alta SE

TOP SPEED – ★
ACCELERATION – ★★★
HANDLING – ★★★
GRIP – ★★★

OVERALL – Bit of a non-starter this one really. Not enough acceleration to escape with any real pace from those tricky spots. No real speed to make it count when the opportunity arises – I'm afraid you're not going to get very far in the Gold Cup with this old thing.

Bonus Tank – Krazed Bulbon

TOP SPEED – ?? ACCELERATION – ??
HANDLING – ?? GRIP – ??

OVERALL – Decent acceleration and a good top speed (excess of 200mph) make this tank ideal for the open courses. It also handles extremely well in the tighter races, sticking soundly to the tarmac and cornering with particular ease. Top Tank!

POWER UPS

Get Tanked Up

Know what's best for bustin' some serious armoured plated moves of misery on the opposition.

Lightning

Speed-up boost. Best to be used in wider areas or on long clear straights (keep an eye on the map). This makes it easier to avoid colliding with opponents or crashing head-on into obstacles.

Homing Missile

A handy weapon for passing a tank that's directly ahead of you. Try to use before your opponent comes to a corner, as this normally results in your missile exploding harmlessly into the scenery. When used correctly, though, this weapon can be a real asset to your arsenal. A Special Homing Missile is also available, which sends the target's electrical system crazy, causing it to lose speed until the effect wares off.

Shield

Extra protection for your armoured shell. Best used when passing a tank in a tight spot. Keep an eye on what power-ups the tanks around you are picking up. This'll give you a good idea as to what kind of attack to expect next. Also excellent for passing over unavoidable mines that would normally do you some nasty damage and slow you right down.

Smart Bomb

This is best used when in close proximity to your rivals. You don't have to be to accurate when using it but the nearer

you are the better. A direct hit will send opposing tanks spinning and bouncing off in all directions, bringing them to an untimely halt, allowing you to pass with no real problem.

Mines

If there's a pesky tank hot on your tail then leave a few mines in its path. This gives you the chance to pull away from them and give you some breathing space. Particularly helpful are the Special Mines – as well as blowing tanks off track they'll send their turrets spinning uncontrollably, rendering their fire-power useless. If in first place, it's a good tactic to leave any mines you're carrying in narrow places on the tracks for the nearest tanks to come a cropper over.

UFO

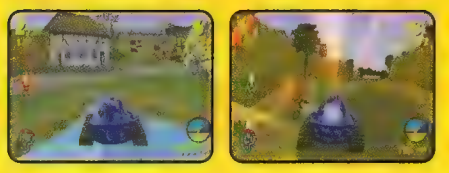
It takes a steady hand and a good eye to execute this power-up with its desired effect. Ensure you've got your quarry directly in your sights and fire. A small UFO icon should appear on the tank targeted and an extra-terrestrial vehicle will beam the poor opponent up and away in a shaft of spectrum light. Very amusing indeed!

COURSES

Here's the best way of making it through the various courses that make up the cup races.

Village

No real problems on this course. Keep in a straight line from the outset, cutting the corners as you go. You'll soon come to a military base. Don't worry too much about your accuracy as the fence and guard hut are flattened in your path. The corners of the buildings are also destroyed with no problems. Before entering the firing range pick up the Lightning. Activate your speed-up just before hitting the shield. You should then be able to make it through, unscathed, at top speed whilst under the cover of your shield. Alternatively, avoid the shell holes and keep on the left embankment. After passing through the fields (where the cows are) you'll come to a narrow section. Grab the power-ups that are here and use them accordingly.

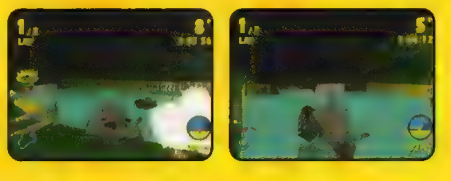


Border

Fire at the tank ahead of you to knock it out of your way before you reach the hairpin bend. Take the left fork around the island. After the tunnel follow the dirt track (look where the power-ups are parachuting down) to avoid the tight corners in this section. Take the next corner on the outside and slip around the right of the fountain. In the tunnel after the housing area be careful to avoid the TNT barrels.

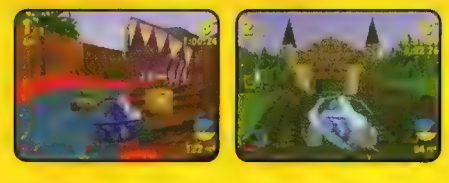
Swamp

Intelligent use of your brakes and of the power ups are the best way to win this course. A tank with a high top speed and a low grip will also fare better on this more open course.



Theme Park

On this course it's imperative that you remember to cut those corners! Squash the various tents and obstacles that obstruct your full view of the track, making it difficult to know which way you should be turning. Before entering the shark's mouth there are normally Lightning power-ups to be had. This is also a good place to use them.

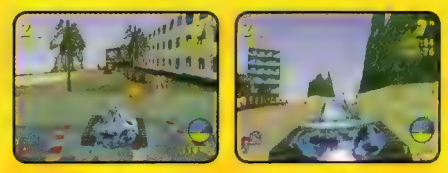


Eastern Bloc

You'll have to handbrake to get round the first corner that takes you into the bank. When you reach the bumpy section try and keep in a straight line. Otherwise you'll find yourself bouncing out of control. Once inside the shopping centre pick up the Lightning and use straight away. In the market square, run over the stalls as there are often power-ups hidden there. Scoot around the right of the clock tower to sneak in front of any opponents.

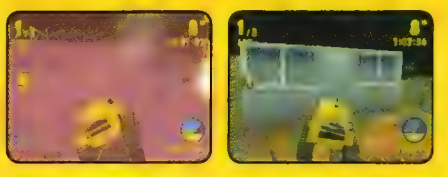
Riviera

A really tight course this one. Plenty of handbraking manoeuvres are required. Try and fire any weapons just as opponents are about to turn a corner. This will slam the weapon into their side. Because of the narrow tracks they'll rebound about, disabling them for slightly longer than normal, allowing you to slide past nicely. Lightning power-ups are best used on the widest section of the track, shortly after exiting the tunnel. Slip into the pits just before the starting line to grab some handy boxes and use them on the straight that follows.



Moon Dome

After starting, slam a shell into the side of the tank ahead just before it turns the corner. Once you're past, take a left through the bollards to gain some extra distance through the short cut. Pick up and use the shields straight away before entering the open area where the meteors are falling. Just before you make a lap, smash through the first portakabin you come to and make a hard left. Around the course you'll come across yellow and green barrels. Avoid these as they explode on contact and throw you off course.



Circuit

Being the final course of the Gold Cup, this track is decidedly tricky. Get past the first tank as quickly as possible. Wait until its turret is pointed in your direction. Give it a blast up the backside and overtake. Stay to the right to grab the Homing Missile. Use this to take care of the next rival racer. In the straight, before you make your first lap, stay to the left and hit the speed up. Use this straightaway to gain some ground on the main pack. As you reach the pits to your right on the second lap, stay left for the Lightning. Once again use it as soon as you've picked it up. Immediately veer to the right, grab the shield and activate it. The third lap can be a traffic jam of tanks and you have to be extra vigilant in order to avoid a pile up. You'll find no more Lightning power-ups and you really will have to rely on your firing and driving skills. Obtaining the necessary weapons is difficult due to the overcrowded track. Grab what you can. Be aware that when you come to the final straight you'll find two Homing Missiles to your left. These can prove invaluable when trying to pass the final two tanks.

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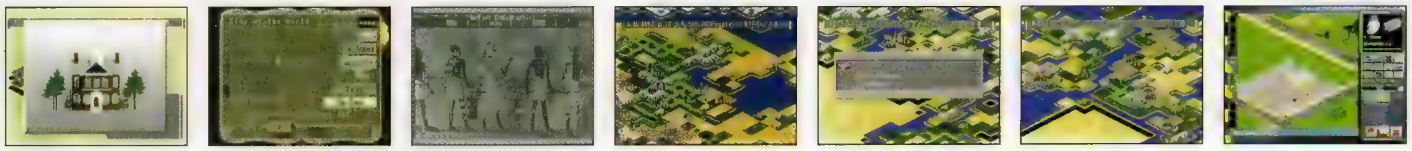


CIVILIZA

A surprise hit last month, not because it is anything short of a masterpiece of game development, but it simply didn't seem to be PlayStation fare. Sid Meier's magnum opus can be a little bit tricky, though, so wrap your head around the basics with our detailed guide.

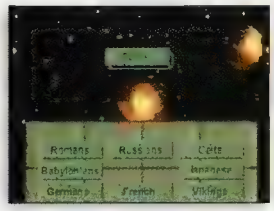
SETTING UP

It is worthwhile choosing to start a custom game rather than simply accepting the settings preset by the computer. For rookies, we would recommend using the normal sized world for a while. The larger world tends to make for a rather long game and long periods without interaction between rival civilisations. The small world provides for a quicker, faster paced game.

When choosing land size, this is strictly a playing preference. We would recommend choosing a large land mass unless you are playing with a large world, when it seems to drag things out just a bit too much. You should also avoid the small land mass/small world combination unless you are looking for a game with quite a different feel to it. The best set-up for land mass has to be 'Archipelago' – for those of you who have been afraid to try this because you think you'll get stuck on some dinky island with no where to build, don't worry. This is rarely the case. We've found this land size to be the most enjoyable to play.

I would not recommend messing with the climate and temperature options. Unless you've tried everything else and are just looking for more of a challenge, leave these as they are.

Next you have the option of setting the world's age. A young world of only three billion years old will tend to have large areas with similar land types (ie. huge mountain ranges). A five billion year old world has more diverse terrain types which change quickly over small areas. The default is the middle ground: four billion years. Although four billion makes for a nice game, I find that five billion is much more enjoyable, providing many ideal city sites to build on.

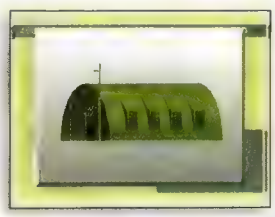


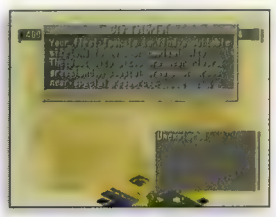
DIFFICULTY LEVELS

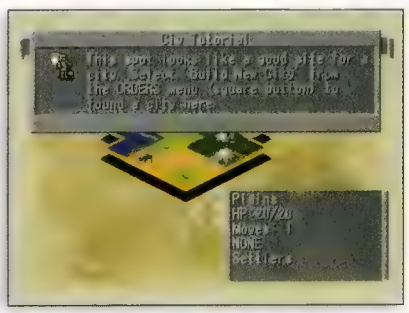
The difficulty of the game affects, among other things, starting funds (50 for Chief, 0 for the others), the number of automatically content citizens (from six to one), rate of population growth of computer controlled players, production times for computer players, rate of research (both computer and human players), and barbarian attack strength.

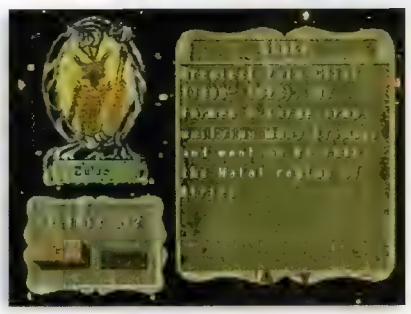
Here are a couple of special notes: at Chief level the player's attack strength is doubled and there is no shield penalty for switching production; at King and higher the computer players will expel your spies and diplomats; at Emperor and Deity levels the computer will bribe cities. At the lower levels the computer is seriously handicapped, allowing for a much sloppier playing style. At the higher levels the computer actually has some advantages over the human player, although it is still not nearly as intelligent as one would like. The most evenly matched level is King level, giving both human and computer players pretty even odds.

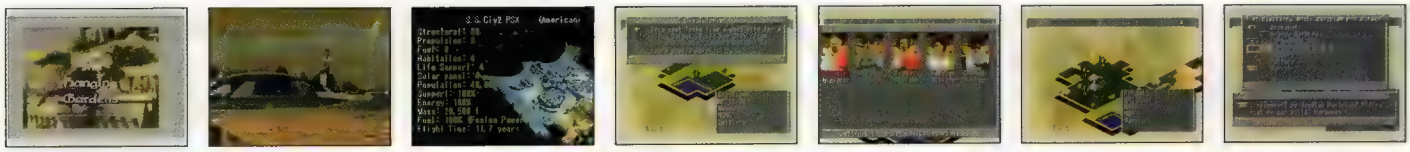
Finally, you must choose the level of barbarian activity. Setting this lower than Restless Tribes will cause you to have a scoring penalty at the end of the game; above this level you actually receive a bonus. The default is Restless Tribes, but for those of you who are seeking a challenge, try out the Raging Hordes level.











ATION II

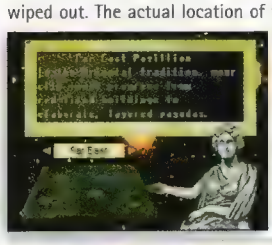
EXPANSION

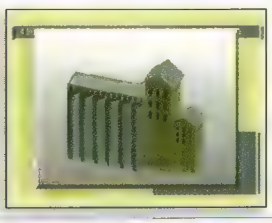
Once you have your first city, you must expand. That is the key to the entire game. At the beginning you expand by founding new cities as rapidly as possible and thereby greatly increasing your trade (Advances!!). Later, you may choose to expand by military conquest instead, but either way, you must expand constantly. The sites for all future cities should be chosen more carefully than the first was. The thing to remember when choosing any city site is BALANCE. You don't want all high food terrain's, and yet you don't want all high shield yielding terrain's either.

Also, you want land types which can be made to yield a decent amount of trade as well or your civilisation will become stagnant and inevitably be wiped out. The actual location of the city should be a terrain type which will yield at least two food, one shield, and one trade.

When making this decision it is important to remember that city squares automatically receive roads (railroads when discovered), irrigation (or mining if more applicable), and at least one shield. This last point is an important one to take note of: any city square, regardless of the terrain type, will produce at least one shield.

Keep this in mind if you ever have the option of founding a city on a normal grassland or on a grassland with a shield: always go for the grassland without a shield (except where this would cause you to miss out on better terrain within your city radius). This way you still get a shield on your city square AND you still can use the shield on the other grassland as well.





CITY FOLK

Keeping your citizens happy is a constant concern, especially on the higher difficulty levels. In this case it is often best to restrict growth somewhat by the constant construction of settlers or by not building a granary.

At lower difficulty levels, a granary is an early must for all cities, but at higher levels the increased rate of population growth can often cause unhappiness to get out of hand. Do not allow your population to grow beyond your ability to keep it content; slow growth until you have the advances (or military units) to control your citizens.

At the beginning, martial law is actually a cheaper and quicker fix than any improvement. At any difficulty level I cannot emphasise enough the value of Michelangelo's Chapel, automatically giving you a cathedral in every city. Unless you are trying to achieve We Love The Leader Day (causing your government to operate as though it were the next higher form), entertainers should only be used as a temporary fix.

One other point worthy of mention is this: the number of citizens that are automatically content (dependent on difficulty level) can actually decrease if you have an extremely large empire and are using a lower form of government and/or are playing at higher difficulty levels.

CHEAT YOUR WAY INTO THE HISTORY BOOKS

MORE MONEY

Enter _CasH as a town name.
Note: Hold ⓒ when entering the letter 'H' at the end of the name.

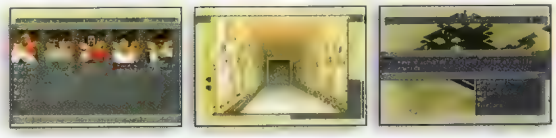
PILLAGE THAT VILLAGE

Goodie Huts or Villages are your pot of gold a the end of the rainbow. Get them all and get them quick! There are six good possible outcomes and only one bad (releasing barbarians), so why not take the risk? It is definitely worth it. If you happen to see a goodie hut before you found your first city, grab it before you build.

The reason for this is that if it happens to grant you a mercenary unit, it will have no home city, free of charge forever. This is worthwhile because if while under Despotism you find mercenary units and they are assigned to one of your cities for support, it can be quite a resource burden while the city is still small. So, if fate smiles upon you with a goodie hut in view at the start, grab it quick. Typically, mercenary units from villages are assigned to the nearest city for support unless the nearest city happens to belong to a rival civilisation; in that case they have no home city and are eternally free of charge. Settlers given to you from goodie huts, however, never require support. Be sure that you take full advantage of this, by sending high defence mercenary units (like archers) to nearby cities and use them for the cities' defences.

This way free units will probably last longer and provide more use than if sent exploring or to the war front. Similarly, with free settlers: never found new cities with them, use them to improve land around existing cities and this way a settler unit may last the entire game and never cost any food or shields.

One particularly devious trick is to save the game right before you check out a goodie hut; if you don't like what it gives you, reload and try again because the computer randomly picks what will be there when you enter, but not before. The same can be done with battles.



TOP TERRAIN

Check out our terrain chart. It's got all the stats you'll need and not a denim clad Irish band in sight... c'est la vie!

TERRAIN TYPE	FOOD	SHIELDS	TRADE
Buffalo			
Oasis/Fruit/Wheat*			
Spice			
Fur*			
Grassland			
Wine			
Plains			

The * indicates that before you choose to settle on this terrain type, check out the surroundings carefully for less useful terrain types (deserts, tundras, and glaciers).

Also consider the defensive bonus for settling on rivers and rough terrain. This would increase your defence by 50% or even 100% if you settled on wine! It is very important to control isthmuses with a strong defence to keep enemies out. If there happens to be a mountain in a strategic position to cut off your rivals, don't just put a unit there or maybe a fortress, instead found a city and buy city walls for it.

The combination of mountains and walls alone will increase your defence factor six fold, not to mention the possibility of veteran status! This city may never be productive, but who cares. That's not it's purpose. If you put the right units there, no one on land will ever defeat it the entire game!

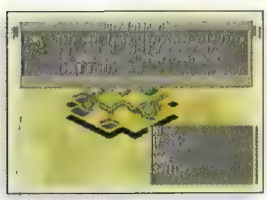
POWER

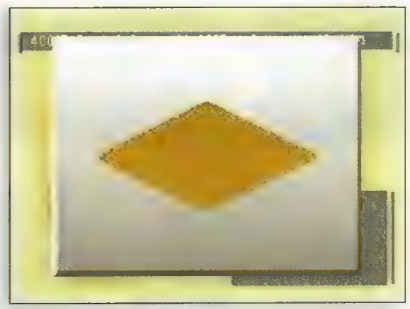
HYDRO PLANT
Safer than Nuclear power, Hydro Plants increase Factory output by 50% and also reduce pollution caused by shield production by 50%.

POWER PLANT
Increases Factory output by 50% but increases pollution. It should be easy to avoid building any of these smoking monsters.

NUCLEAR PLANT
Has the same effects as the Hydro Plant but Nuclear Plants do run the risk of meltdown. Once you discover Fusion Power this risk is eliminated.

SOLAR PLANT
Increases Factory output by 50%, and completely eliminates all pollution caused by Shield Production. Also helps to slow the global warming.

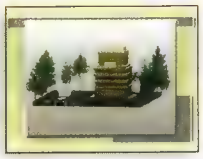




CITY IMPROVEMENTS

Creating and improving your city isn't just a case of slapping in buildings willy-nilly. No sir, you need to know the importance and effects each erection will have on your sprawling metropolis.

CITY PEOPLE PLEASERS



CATHEDRAL
Makes three unhappy citizens content, but this is reduced to two after discovering Communism. The discovery of theology will have the effect of adding one content citizen to each city equipped with a Cathedral.

COLOSSEUM
Three unhappy citizens in the city are made content, although this will increase to four once electronics have been discovered.

COURTHOUSE
Makes one content citizen happy and the city more resistant to bribery by enemy diplomats and spies. Also decreases corruption by 50%.

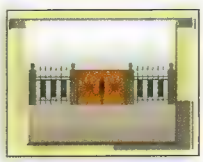
MASS TRANSIT
Eliminates pollution caused by population.

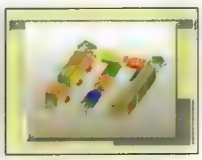
PALACE
Eliminates corruption and waste in the city and decreases them in neighbouring cities. You can have only one Palace at any time.

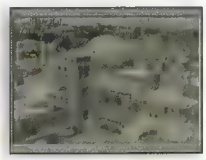
POLICE STATION
Reduces the number of unhappy citizens created. The effect is one per unit away from their home city.

RECYCLING CENTRE
Decreases the pollution caused by Shield production by two thirds. Other types of pollution are not affected and must be tackled with mass transit.

TEMPLE
Makes one unhappy citizen content which increases to two after the discovery of Mysticism. A temple must be present before you can build a cathedral.







PRODUCTION

GRANARY
The Granary has effect when the city increases in size. When this happens only half the food store is depleted.

HARBOUR
Allows Ocean squares near to the city to produce one extra unit of Food.

SUPER-HIGHWAYS
Causes all squares in the city's radius with roads or railroads produce 50% more Trade and also increases revenue from the trade routes.

SUPERMARKET
Allows double-irrigated farmland squares in the city's radius to produce 50% more Food.

FINANCE

BANK
Increases tax and luxury output by an additional 50% which is cumulative with Marketplace.

CAPITALISATION
Converts all Shield production into taxes.

MARKETPLACE
Increases tax and luxury output by 50%.

STOCK EXCHANGE
Increases tax and luxury output by an additional 50% which is also cumulative with Marketplace and Bank up to a total increase of 150%.

GROWTH

AQUEDUCT
Allows your city to grow beyond size 8.

LIBRARY
Increases science output by 50%.

RESEARCH LAB
Increases science output by an additional 50%, but is cumulative with Library and University up to a total increase of 150%.

SEWER SYSTEM
Allows a city to grow beyond size 12.

UNIVERSITY
Increases science output by an additional 50% which is cumulative with Library.

SPACESHIP

SPACESHIP STRUCTURAL
Forms the framework of your spaceship.

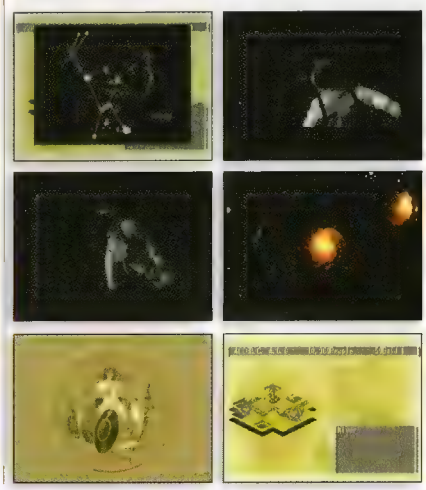
SPACESHIP COMPONENTS
Thrust – Each component adds 25% to a spaceship's thrusting abilities.

Fuel – Each component provides the fuel for one Thrust component.

SPACESHIP MODULES
Population Provides living space for 10,000 colonists per module.

Life Support – Provides food, air, and support for one Population module.

Solar Panel – Provides power for any two other modules available.



DEFENSIVE/OFFENSIVE

AIRPORT
Allows a city to produce Veteran air units. Any air unit spending an entire turn in the city will be completely repaired. The airport also allows you to airlift units.

BARRACKS
Allows you to produce Veteran ground units and will repair damaged ground units in one turn.

CITY WALLS
The defence factor of units inside the city is tripled against all ground units except Howitzers.

FACTORY
Increases Shield production by 50%.

COASTAL FORTRESS
Increases the defence factors of all units inside the city against shore bombardments from enemy ships by 100%.

MANUFACTURING PLANT
Increases Shield production by an additional 50% which is cumulative with Factory.

OFFSHORE PLATFORM
Allows all Ocean squares near the city to produce one Shield.

PORT FACILITY
Allows you to produce Veteran sea units. A ship spending an entire turn in the city will be completely repaired.

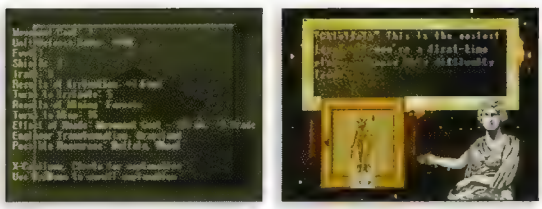
SAM MISSILE BATTERY
Increases the defence factors of all units inside the city against air units and non-nuclear missile attacks by 100%.

SDI DEFENCE
Protects everything within three spaces of the city from nuclear attack.

POLLUTION

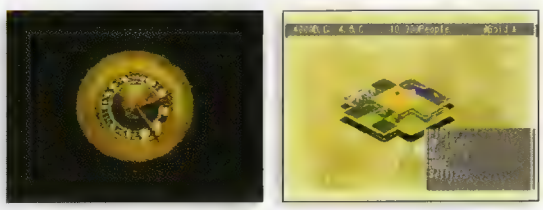
There are two types of pollution in Civilization II: population pollution and industrial pollution. Both types have the same effect on any terrain square; pollution causes all resources (food, trade, and shields) to be produced at 50% of their 'clean' amount.

Population pollution is related to the size of your city, that is, the larger the city, the greater the chance of pollution occurring. However, this is only the case after the discovery of industrialisation. The amount of population pollution increases with the discovery of certain advances: Automobile, Mass Production, Plastics, or if Sanitation has not been discovered. The discovery of Environmentalism lessens the population pollution as does the presence of a Solar Plant in the city (this improvement also helps with industrial pollution). The only way to control population pollution is to build the Mass Transit improvement in large cities.



The other type of pollution is industrial pollution. This type is dependent on the number of shields a city is producing (the shields used for support are not included in figuring pollution). The Hydro Plant and Nuclear Plant improvements cut the amount of shield pollution in half. It is important to note that a city can have only one type of power plant of the four types offered: Hydro Plants, Nuclear Plants, Solar Plants, and Power Plants.

Power Plants are usually available before the others, but should be avoided if possible because they cause more pollution and do nothing to help lessen its impact. Wait for Hydro Plants, they are usually not far behind (or consider the Hoover Dam wonder, giving you a Hydro Plant in every city).

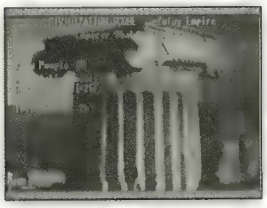


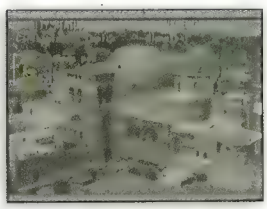
Down the technology road you may discover Recycling, allowing you to build a Recycling Plant which cuts a city's industrial pollution by two thirds. This is usually enough, in conjunction with Mass Transit, to control most pollution problems.

However, for those who want to stop the problem all together, the construction of a Solar Plant should be considered. This improvement reduces industrial pollution to zero. It also has a few other positive points: as mentioned earlier, it helps a little bit in reducing population pollution and it changes the way the computer totals the number of polluted squares on the map. Every solar plant your civilisation builds takes one half of a square off of the computer's pollution count.

The total of the pollution icons from both population and industrial represents the possibility of pollution occurring each turn.

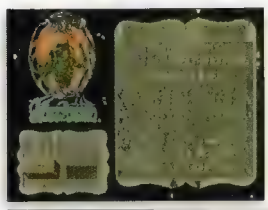
This is not a percent based on one hundred shields being the max, but instead just part of a complex formula that the computer uses to determine if a random square in the city radius is polluted during any particular turn. Higher difficulty level and the number of advances discovered (regardless of what they are) also increase the chance of pollution as figured by this formula.





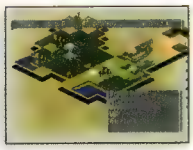
Pollution also causes another problem besides simply reducing the resources produced in a square; it can also cause global warming. For those of you who have never seen the effects of global warming in Civ II, try very hard to keep it that way.

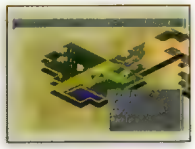
Global warming has a chance of occurring if at least eight or nine squares are polluted at any one time; this value increases with each successive incident of this type. This count only includes polluted squares within the radii of your cities, so pollution around your rivals' cities doesn't hurt you. This count can also be lowered, as mentioned above, by the building of solar plants.



CORRUPTION AND WASTE

ADVANCES

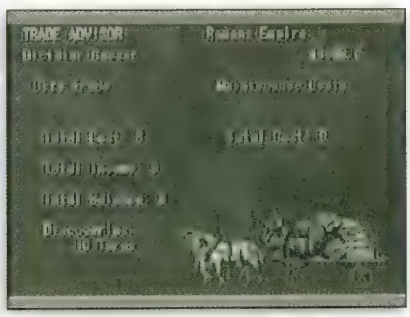




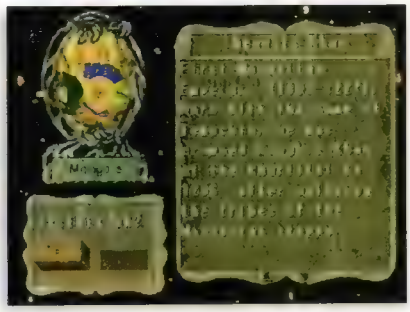
With eighty-nine different advances available in the game, it can be kind of confusing as to which ones to research. Whatever your intentions, it is important to not just blunder around choosing whatever looks the nicest at the time; research toward a goal.

If at any time it happens that none of the advances you need for your goal are available, then you may consider picking up something that would suit your current needs or getting something which would help toward your next goal. The first target of your research should definitely be Monarchy.

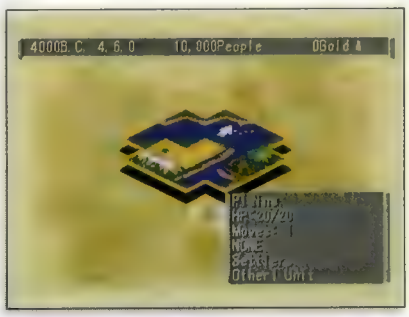
Despotism has just got to go as soon as possible and Monarchy is a better choice early in the game than Republic because it is initially easier to keep your population happy (martial law). After you get Monarchy, work toward the advances which give you the ability to build the two best wonders in the game: Leonardo's Workshop and Michelangelo's Chapel.



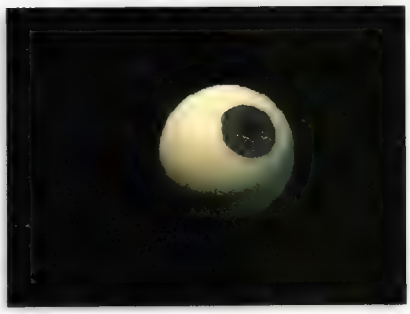
Go after Monotheism (Michelangelo's Chapel) first and then rush toward Invention (Leonardo's Workshop). Sometimes, however, we've found it better to head toward Invention and pick up the path to Monotheism on the way or trade for it. It is never a mistake to research philosophy if you will be the first to discover it because it grants you one free civilisation advance, leaving you no further behind your plans than if you had passed it over. It is important to be the first to discover these advances so that you are sure to be able to build these key wonders for your civilisation.



Not all of these advances need be researched in any one game. Unless you need something that the advance will make available to you, don't research it. And if your need is not immediate, put it off as long as possible, maybe even until everything else is discovered. It is important to notice that the prerequisites for the Future Technologies are only Fusion Power and Recycling; you don't need to discover everything in order to go after these score-boosting techs.



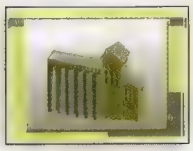
If your research is stagnant, you will die. That's all there is to it, you have to keep up with everyone else and preferably be ahead. When you focus your research toward one specific goal, you often find yourself needing some of the advances that you miss on your path. If that is the case, and it surely will be, you may want to consider trading for the ones you need the most, and trying to steal the rest. After all, why share your knowledge with potential rivals



unless you have to? If the time and resources are available, the Great Library wonder is probably the best way to pick up those advances that you missed along the way.

Ten of the twenty-eight Wonders of the World expire with the discovery of certain advances. This is obviously to your disadvantage if you have the wonder, so you should put off cancelling your own wonders through knowledge as long as possible. For example, if you have Leonardo's Workshop (which automatically upgrades obsolete units), try to put off the discovery of Automobile until you have used it as fully as possible to upgrade your units.

The expiration of wonders can be to your advantage as well if a rival civilisation has built a useful wonder which you don't want them to get much use out of. If you want to stop a rival's wonder, just discover the advance which cancels it. At the bottom of the page is a list of the wonders which expire and what causes them to expire.

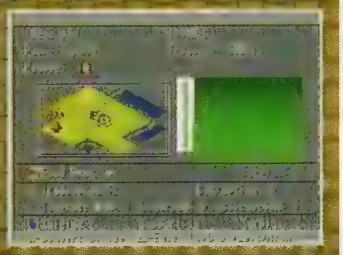


SPECIALISTS

There are three types of specialist: Entertainers, Taxmen, and Scientists.

ENTERTAINERS

An Entertainer will add two luxuries to his city and is often a quick fix for civil disorder. We don't recommend extended use of Entertainers, however; solve your happiness problems with something more permanent (city improvements or wonders) and then get them back to work on the terrain.

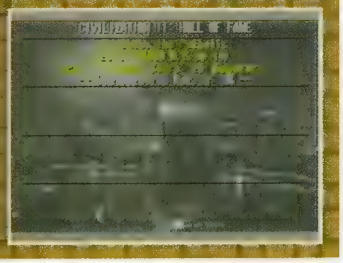


TAXMEN

Taxmen will add two gold to the city's tax income. If you are only a few gold short of meeting your costs each turn, then a taxman can often be a better fix than changing the tax rate (and thereby lessening either luxuries or science). However, if it is possible to build an improvement to solve the problem, do this instead.

SCIENTISTS

Scientists will add three flasks to the science research of their city. Scientists are especially useful when a city has grown so large that the number of citizens is greater than the number of terrain squares to be worked (20). In this case you must have specialists and Scientists are the best to have, depending on the specific situation of course.



WONDERS OF THE WORLD

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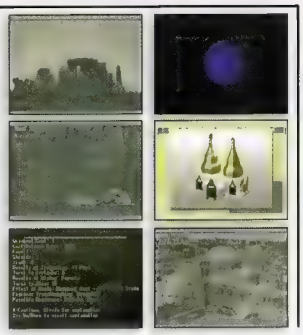
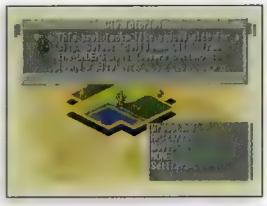
WONDER OF THE WORLD	EXPIRES WITH
Colossus	Flight
Great Library	Electricity
Great Wall	Metallurgy
Hanging Gardens	Railroad
King Richard's Crusade	Industrialisation
Leonardo's Workshop	Automobile
Lighthouse	Magnetism
Marco Polo's Embassy	Communism
Oracle	Theology
Sun Tzu's War Academy	Mobile Warfare



SCORE BOOSTERS

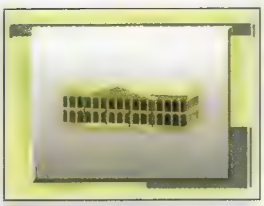
We've found one little trick which tends to boost your score quite a bit at the end of the game. If you're launching a space ship, start this a little before that. If you are conquering the world, put off the conquering of the last city for a while to do this.



Switch to a democracy and dedicate all of your trade to luxuries and put as many entertainers as possible in every city. Have every city working on capitalisation to cover your expense.

Doing this should cause 'We Love the President Day' to be declared in almost every one of your cities. This will cause your population to grow by one in each of these cities each turn. Your population will grow beyond the city's ability to support it until it actually uses all of your food storage.

At this point it will decrease by one per turn until it is stable again. You want to time things so that this doesn't happen before you win the game. Each content citizen will boost your score by one point and each happy one adds two points. If you try this trick in a significantly large empire it can add quite a bit to your final score.



No single strategy is foolproof; so take our advice on board, but importantly, make your civilisation your own.

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THEY WILL DESTROY TOKYO!

AS THE GAME EVIL ZONE has some pretty strong manga stylings at its demon-wombed centre, Titus has procured a massive collection of the very best in big-eyed, monster-gorging, schoolgirl-ogling animé films for three lucky readers, worth a total of £700! This will include:

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The winner will receive twenty vids, two runners up will get five films each, while the cell art and goodies will be distributed evenly between all winners. All you need to do is finish the following sentence in a manner we find humorous:

"IF TENTACLES ERUPTED FROM MY GUTS SUDDENLY, I WOULD..."

Answers to:

THAT'S A BANDE DESSINÉE, STATION MAGAZINE, RAPIDE PUBLISHING, 1 ROMAN COURT, 48 NEW NORTH ROAD, EXETER, EX4 4EP

Because of the nature of some of these videos
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Colin McRae Rally	£31.99	Lemmings	£17.99	Resident Evil 2	£30.99	Vigilante 8	£20.99
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Crash Bandicoot 3	£20.99	Musik	£27.99	Soviet Strike	£17.99	Worms	£16.99
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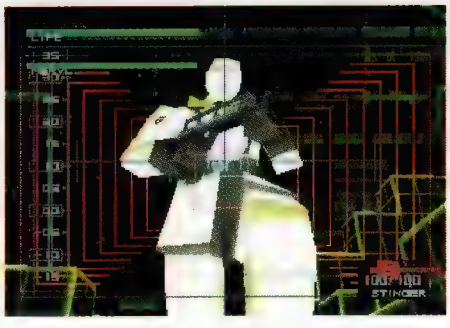
The Stealth of the Nation

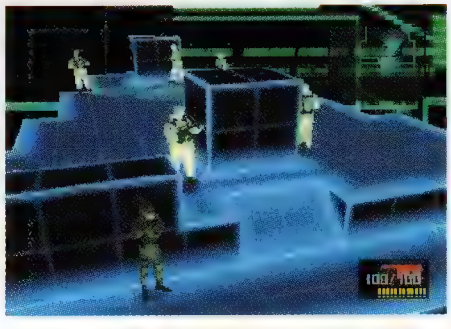
We've all played it, and everyone's got an opinion about Konami's super-stylish infiltration masterpiece. But what thinking beats at the heart of this must-have title? Come with us as we delve deeper into the subconscious of *Metal Gear Solid*...

While videogame journalism

has always been a willing bedfellow to hollow hyperbole and swooning assertions, the consensus of opinion surrounding Metal Gear Solid regarding its status as an object of genuine artistic standing is still pleasantly surprising to behold. Of course, there have been criticisms levelled at the game, and it is therefore worthy of some closer inspection now that the hype of the release is some way behind us.

If you assume that the goal for a piece of art is the creation of emotional resonance, then *MGS* achieves this grown-up status with ease, provoking moods in the player/viewer that span the entire spectrum of human reactions, from tension to pathos and back again. One gets the impression that this was always a prime obsession of the game's mastermind, Hideo Kojima, who possesses the aesthetic skills of a film director melded to the traditional propellerhead technical knowledge required for game designers, a combination that in the coming reign of the PSX2 will become all the more vital. His attention to both visual detail and narrative texture evoke echoes of maestros such as George Lucas, whilst still remaining true to the manga-tuned aesthetics



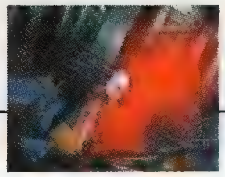
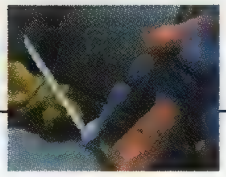


Integral To The plot

TACTICAL ESPIONAGE ACTION

METAL GEAR SOLID

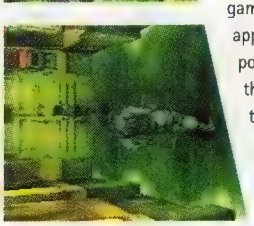
Titled with what must be yet another dose of irony, Metal Gear Solid: Integral is a surprise additional package of new features to the main game which ever so slightly beggars the question, why weren't they implemented in the first place? As you may have read last issue, it will provide an option for playing in a dedicated Doom-esque first-person mode and add special secret missions that are made available upon completion of the game, plus a seriously expanded (300 extra levels) holographic training mode which will include the mouth-watering option of playing as Meryl or (better yet) the red-suited Ninja, relentlessly tracking down Snake. Other augmentations include the choice for Japanese or English subtitles, an adjustable difficulty level (including a random guard facility, meaning no two games will ever be the same), new costumes and weapon controls and a bonus PocketStation game. The Snake's-eye view should provide a vastly different playing experience to the usual top-down angle, as it will put the onus on the player to study and memorise the patrol patterns of guards and suchlike without the aid of an easy-peasy 'God's Eye' view that let's you see what Snake technically couldn't (and hide what he probably could!). Levels of tension will rise accordingly, as will the length of time spent to play through, value fans. As the Metal Gear development team seem to love piling on the hidden details, rest assured there are bound to be more to the add-on than just these welcome (if basic) adjustments.

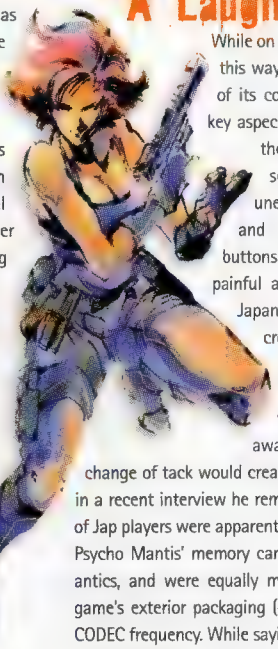
of his own cultural roots. The careful balance of these foundational structures is something that only a fraction of Hollywood has managed to capture effectively, and is ironically achieved within the traditionally low-art parentheses of a computer game.

The proud self-regard that *MGS* exhibits extends as far as the game's film-aping credit sequences, which break from the videogame norm and list the actual real-life voice actor's names, in much the same manner as a 'real' movie. In addition, the game's accompanying watercolour-based artwork is radically different from the normal computer-rendered fodder that proliferates in the industry, and adds an edge of stylish maturity over other cartoon derived promotional graphics.

Importantly, there is an understanding at work in the mind of the *Metal Gear* design team which transcends the merely stylistic or technical innovations which have made other games important in the past. All the evidence points towards an intellectual engagement with the medium itself – whereas *Tomb Raider* or *Resident Evil* broke new ground in terms of presentation or subject matter, *MGS* displays an artist's appreciation of the medium itself, remaining knowingly arcadey in many areas (notably the top-down interface, kept from the original pre-PSX *Metal Gear* games). This sense is also apparent at a certain pivotal point in the game, when the screen turns black and the cryptic message 'HIDEO' appears in the top right-hand corner, a punctuative moment which surely marks the intrusion of the author into the game world; a technique known as 'vertigo' which is usually employed in the more casually experimental context of post-modernist fiction. Pretension or aspiration, it's still a revolutionary approach that shows Kojima's willingness to play with the unconscious conventions of the videogame medium.



Game For A Laugh

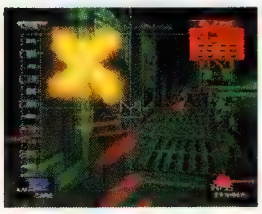
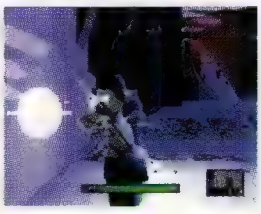


While on the one hand, *Metal Gear* tries in this way to distance itself from the rest of its computer game cousins, in other key aspects it actively draws attention to the fact. For example, in the torture sequence Revolver Ocelot unexpectedly drops out of character and lectures the player on which buttons to press in order to resist his painful attentions. This is a particularly Japanese tendency that only seems to crop up in games created in the Orient, and again it is an ironic gesture on the part of Kojima who would have been only too aware of the bafflement this sudden change of tack would create in a Western player. However, in a recent interview he remarked that a significant number of Jap players were apparently unamused by episodes such as Psycho Mantis' memory card-reading and joypad-swapping antics, and were equally miffed at having to refer to the game's exterior packaging (of all things) to find out a vital CODEC frequency. While saying little for the sense of humour of our Oriental cousins, it does show a respectful nod towards the past history of computer games (where as an anti-piracy measure you would often be asked to type in a phrase from a game's accompanying manual) while also serving to further remind the player that amongst all this terribly immersive realism, they are still just playing a videogame.

Brief Encounter

Nonetheless there have been blips of perceived imperfection amongst the adoring massive, predominantly regarding the comparatively brief number of hours it takes to play the game through first time (a conservative figure comes in at the 13 hour mark). When held up next to the likes of *Tomb Raider III* (which takes around 40 hours to complete) this does sound like a less economically wise way to splash your £44.99, but the vast majority of players who buy *TRIII* never finish half of the game, much less take Lara to the climax of her adventures, intimidated by the massive task in hand and the serious commitment of time and concentration it demands. Could it be that *Metal Gear Solid* is thus deliberately short, so as to allow the player a greater chance of experiencing it as a cogent whole, in the same way as one would enjoy a movie or novel? Is enjoying *MGS* for a conclusive 15 hours a more fulfilling way to spend time than playing *TRIII* for an inconclusive 40? It's a point open to personal reaction, but I'd say the intensity provided through Snake's short, sharp shock tactics has the edge in the current day and age, obsessed as it is to an almost Freudian degree with the size of its levels.

In addition to this grumble (which considering the fine grain of the *Metal Gear* environment was probably inevitable anyway) many (including myself) have found the boss levels needlessly repetitive, jarring badly against the free-flowing and non-linear nature of the rest of the game. This style of climactic confrontation is again both avowedly Japanese – whose shoot 'em-ups have been centred around nibbling away at a vastly more powerful enemy whose behaviour changes the more damage you inflict – and self-consciously arcade styled. The 'balance' of these sections hence flies in the face of modern game design, based as they are around finding weak areas through laborious trial and error and then exploiting this flaw repeatedly. For example, in the Ninja scene it's only possible to diminish the cyborg's gargantuan energy bar through use of a wimpy three-blow combination, which takes the enemy to his knees if successful. However, once he's winded it's no longer possible to do any more damage, meaning Snake must flee and carry out the same attack again, roughly twenty times at my estimation. There's no prospect for cunningly using the terrain or surrounding objects to your advantage, say by flooding the room with gas, planting booby-traps of C4, collapsing scenery onto the Ninja and so forth. Winning through any other method is impossible, and even sneakily using chaff grenades to scramble his electronic defences brings no real reward. It's the first genuine sticking point of the game, and getting past the one-eyed chap brings feelings of relief rather than victory. Compared to the cutting-edge notions of stealth and infiltration the game virtually pioneered, these set pieces can seem almost archaic, with the marginally less annoying tank battle harking back to unevolved games such as *Commando*, for god's sake. Hopefully *Metal Gear Solid 2* will be a PSX2 game, and thus there will be space for fully realised hand-to-hand fighting sections (Solid Snake with a *Tekken 3*-sized repertoire of moves anyone?) and more daringly designed and open-ended boss sections that reward clever play rather than thumb endurance and pattern-learning. Come on Hideo, make us feel alive again...

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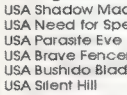

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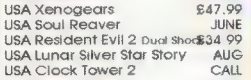

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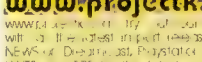

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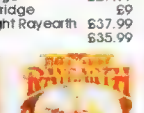

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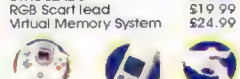

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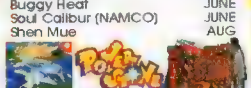

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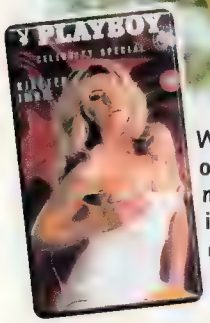

When not spending our spare time reading Camus, Sartre or Nietsche, we here at STATION mansion like nothing more than watching luscious ladies taking their clothes off in glamourous locations. Playboy has heard our plea and will be releasing the video *Kirsten Imrie: Celebrity Special* on June 7th for the bargain price of £14.99. This lovely girl (32E – 24 – 34) will do everything she can to make you hot under the collar...

For all you good, good people, we have 10 copies of this red hot title to give away, just by completing the following sentence:

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Station

Your monthly handle on the changing face of PlayStation gaming

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Shrinkwrapped Schoolgirls' Pants

OUR MONTHLY GAZE INTO THE JAPANESE PSYCHE

The Game Paradise 2

In Japan, animé is akin to an alcoholic mixer; liberally applied to any genre like a gaudy garnish of hundreds-and-thousands. The **Game Paradise 2** is almost such a cliché that it defies belief. To start with, you are a doe-eyed schoolgirl. Not only that, but a schoolgirl adorned as a Hugh Hefner 'bunny girl'. You pilot a Dali-esque surreal ship through levels based on other popular game genres, such as driving games. If you feel the burning desire for a transcendental (and perfectly legal) experience, give this chirpy title a toke.

Nocturnal Illusion

As a sordid backbench MP invariably slouches his way to the Wigmore club, so STATION inevitable returns to hentai. Blame Nick, it's his influence that has caused this plight. The scene for the game is an ethereal realm of entrapped women, yearning for the tender caress of human flesh. The player is transported into this realm with lascivious consequences; poke a phantom and stuff a spirit. Why anybody would prefer this quasi-erotica to the real world escapes us. You should see the scene with the woman and the statue, yeowch!

PlayStation 2 – Expensive?

Unforeseen production costs stymie Sony as the unit price of PlayStation 2 rockets upward like a NASA launch.

▲ Small is indeed beautiful, but at what cost?

As is a commonly established fact in the world of the techno-boffin, the ostensible cost of console design lies in the components; chips and processors with convoluted titles such as the L7-180774-4AD. One of my personal favourites, although with a slightly lower bus speed than the PH-777. The core, the silicon heart, of PlayStation 2 is the Emotion Engine, an immensely powerful little number, which must be causing Sony's accountants more chin stroking than a chess grandmaster. The initial production run of these chips will allegedly be highly unprofitable for Sony, culminating in the fact that each PlayStation 2 will cost between $300-$400 to produce, without retail mark up. It should be stressed that these allegations are in no way confirmed by or taken from Sony.

Resident McBeal!

Somebody, somewhere, is laughing at us. Damn you!

Hats off to the wag that (briefly) suckered us with this hoax Resident Evil 3 **movie.** After downloading it over the best part of twenty-five minutes, we watched with baited breath as a booming voiceover set the scene with footage from the first two games, building to an anticipatory climax. What would the hideous mutated results of the T-Virus experiment look like now? As it turned out they'll look like the dancing baby from **Ally McBeal**, shaking its booty with some pals in a zombie-torn landscape. Yep, it was another hilarious internet gag, and we fell for it. I hope you're happy, whoever's responsible...

BETA ZONE

VIGILANTE 8: SECOND OFFENCE

PUBLISHER: Activision RELEASE: Autumn

The reasonably popular car combat game with the cool afro-centric seventies setting will make a welcome comeback this autumn, enhanced by a slew of improvements. Smarter graphics should now include fog and exhaust effects and more pleasing explosions, while a range of new weaponry and special moves will no doubt spice up the already riotous action. Activision has been listening to the comments of the punters and resultingly an upgraded quest mode will add one player longevity through introducing lengthier and more difficult missions.

iNFO STATION

NO-DUN ASSASIN

American peripheral developer SCE&T is ceasing further development of PlayStation light guns in an attempt to discourage violence in children. No light guns were displayed at E3 for the selfsame reasons. The fact that these same young people can openly purchase a real firearm somewhat attenuates the point of the exercise, however.

PUCCA PACCA'S BACCA

Pac-Man, the ravenous yellow glob that thrived on consuming 'power pills' and persecuting ghosts, like many Friday nights with the STATION boys. Benevolent Namco is celebrating the 20th anniversary of the eponymous dot in a fully 3D PlayStation title, with Pac exploring Ghost Island in search of royalties from all the cash-in merchandise. Possibly.

X-Rated

ELSPA 18

Unofficial ratings cause official mayhem. Officially...

Microsoft is once again courting controversy, not over Bill Gates' dubious fashion choices, but age classification ratings. ELSPA (European Leisure Software Publishers Association) is acrimonious as Microsoft is using age ratings that have not been approved by ELSPA, a fact made curious when classification for ELSPA is voluntary anyway. So distraught is ELSPA at this act of bare-faced recalcitrance that legal action is being pursued against renegade Microsoft, now penitently crawling back in line with ELSPA regulations. Score one for censorship, sadly.

SEPARATED AT BIRTH?

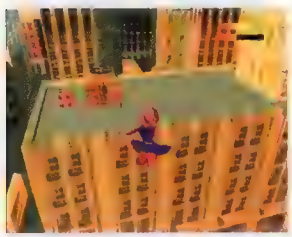
Oh yes, one of them is the premier doe-eyed cute female musician in today's world and the other is Natalie Imbruglia. The big question on the STATION boys' lips is: was Lammy (star of rhythm action title **Um Jammer Lammy**) based on the Aussie beauty or did our Nat design herself around our pixelated pal? The only fact is, I know who I'd prefer playing my axe, but then some freaks would probably accept Lammy spanking their plank. (They don't get out much.)

NATALIE IMBRUGLIA

LAMMY

My Spidey-Sense Is Tingling

Arachnophobic? Get over it sunshine...



Your friendly neighbourhood webslinger will swing into town later this year, thanks to Activision which is planning a three-dee game based around the exploit's of Peter Parker's arachnid alter-ego. Extreme wall-crawling action over the rooftops of New York featuring heavily, unsurprisingly. But can it match the glory of the slow-swinging Atari VCS cartridge of yore?

▲ He's been away too long, but finally goes 16bit.

Dirt Wasted Away

Dubious tie-in licence bloke ahoy?

Impressive motocross sim Dirt has had its name changed, unfortunately, to the rather less snappy but marketing man-friendly Championship Moto Cross featuring Ricky Carmichel. Apparently 'Stateside the redheaded Mr Carmichel is a bit of a dab hand at riding very fast over bumpy dirt, and so the whole world is lumbered with his Jeremy McGrath-esque moniker over their unsuspecting games. Marvellous.

NEWS NIPPON

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DROPPING A CAST

More price cuts rumoured as Sega's new machine fails to hit Japanese targets.

The humble Dreamcast is not having the phenomenal impact that Sega was assuming, with a price drop already in the cash-flow pipeline. The fact that the console has been on general release in Japan for only six months bespeaks some serious shortfalls in unit sales. From June 24th, Dreamcast will be retailing for 19,800 yen, approximately $160. The ramifications of this for the European release could be a veritable tsunami of price reductions, for if the price of a Japanese import Dreamcast is relatively cheaper than an official PAL Dreamcast, Sega can but take notice. That is unless it scales down its original UK launch price.

SPACE INVADERS

PUBLISHER: Activision RELEASE: November

I am the nostalgia man, and I have no time for these new fangled multi level game thingies, oh no to my dip every game was a classic and Space Invaders was the king of them all. Protect the world against evil peering aliens attempting to destroy us all, now that is entertainment my boy. Oh, and a minute, there was people at Activision are releasing a spanky new version for the PlayStation in a mere few months, good lad.

ARENA AD

PUBLISHED: SCI RELEASE: Winter

Indulge your Spartacus fantasies with this gladiatorial combat game, bursting to accessible arenas and pitched to annihilate your foe in amusing manners. Fighters, gladiators and 28 areas will be available to spill blood within. Boasting realtime movement, physics and character evolution, this should be interesting, to say the least. Sadly, the option to play as infamous Roman madperson Caligula Dicker is not available.

iNFO STATION

RACING AHEAD

Cunning, perfidious Sony are again teasing the salivating gamer with the launch of a **Gran Turismo 2** website, months before the release proper. The site itself offers movie footage and car information/specifications. The ability to speak Japanese will also be advantageous to drawing any sense out of the damn thing.

AHH, MONEYPENNY!

Spy Hunter, a game revered by Speccy die-hards, was a top-down driving/shooting title, a precursor to **Carmageddon**. The chance is almost upon us to experience it again thanks to Midway, who is updating it for PSX. The combination of frantic car/projectile weapon action should prove enticing.

Star Wars Jumps Back In time

Not even all the hype in the world and George Lucas' vast truckfulls of cash can keep a videogame on schedule, it seems.

As you may have noticed by its conspicuous absence from this issue, the Star Wars: Episode One game has been tragically delayed until August, thanks to some 'last minute tweaking' that has apparently been important enough to delay the game way past the film's release date. All we can say is they must have been pretty damn important tweaks to slip the game so much. However, on a more upbeat note we're proud to report that the first review of the Star Wars: Episode One Racer game will be within these very pages round about August. We've played the N64 version, and must admit it's looking pretty groovy in a kind of rock-strewn WipEout manner...

USA TODAY

DOWN, DOWN DEEPER AND DOWNLOAD

Activision, the crazed group of megalomaniacs, is seeking to dominate television and subvert prone young minds. Well, that may be a little hyperbolic, but the pioneering company is set to offer PC CD games directly to the television via the cable connection almost all American homes possess. Download time should be minimal. The principle of the system could revolutionise home gaming, with future consoles downloading their games from a central website as opposed to purchasing a storage medium. Also, downloading from television receptors means that you won't have to watch **Last Of The Summer Wine**. Thank Christ.

Nothing Is What It Bleems

Small-time cheeky emulationists stick it to The Man.

Emulation is the word that must send chills down the spine of Sony lately, what with the Macintosh-compatible Connectix Virtual Game Station **(see issue 7) getting it in a litiginous whirl and now this, the** Bleem!, **basically the same gizmo but for powerful PCs.** The real worry for Uncle Sony, however, is the reputed graphical enhancements the program can bring, as these screenshots below will attest to. The levels of far-off detail are improved and the frame rate upped, apparently, as long as you've got a flash processor on board. We can't comment on the effectiveness of the software in action as yet, but at E3 legal representatives from Sony marched over to the **Bleem!** stand and demanded they remove screenshots comparing the performance of the system versus that of the console. Apparently, a war of words ensued, and an amused crowd gathered to watch the sparks fly as E3 representatives and Sony lawyers insisted they had an injunction against the upstart company to prevent such an occurrence. Considering the pro-emulator finding of a Californian court recently, Sony has every right to be annoyed, particularly when the bit of kit could make the genuine console seem obsolete.

TITANIUM ANGELS

PUBLISHER: SCI RELEASE: Winter

Titanium Angels, which sounding like an exclusive night venue, is a 3D action extravaganza in the Tomb Raider mould. Set in a disturbing alien [illegible] with [illegible] you're [illegible] the [illegible] Demon Rider, [illegible] enough it keeps running from room to room, so to [illegible] enemies. With its flag firmly on the action pole, it seems to be a prime candidate for some severe finger bashing.

SOUTH PARK RALLY

PUBLISHER: Acclaim RELEASE: Winter

And yet [illegible] does not [illegible] purgatory begin. Every time the enemy gets near the ground [illegible] begins with the [illegible] South Park Rally is essentially Mario Kart with the South Park facade. Details are sparse, but the game allows you to race as (amongst many others) Kyle in a red Porsche, Chef in a Station Wagon, Stan in a [illegible] and Death in a hearse. Dude, sweet!

MP3? ERR, GREAT...

It seems that a plug-in MP3 player may well be on the way that fits into your PlayStation's parallel port. MP3 (or MPEG Layer 3) is a file format that compresses audio tracks into smaller sizes without compromising sound quality. Information is scarce, for now check out the website-in-progress at http://www.mp3enhancer.com/.

Owen Hart 1965-1999

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH...Look out below!

Tragedy struck the world of wrestling, live on pay-per-view when Owen Hart plunged 50 feet to his death. At the 'Over The Edge' event, Hart was in character as The Blue Blazer and was supposed to be lowered into the ring, but fell from the rafters, striking the ring post. Hart is one of the characters who features in the forthcoming title **WWF Attitude** and at this stage, so late in development, it appears that he will remain in the game, but Acclaim is considering a special opening screen in tribute. An Acclaim representative commented 'Owen did a lot of things for us. He went to different game magazines and helped us out with lots of different projects. You could say he was a special friend of Acclaim'.

Ground Control To Omi-Kron...

A cutting-edge game meets a hoary old popster. Go figure.

Ageing rocker David Bowie has taken time off from attaching himself parasite-like to every popular exponent of electronic music long enough to write the soundtrack to Omikron, Eidos' impending 3D Action Adventure. Fans of the Thin White Duke will be thrilled to learn that he will also star as a character in the game, although whether this will be a reprise of his seminal role as The Goblin King in **Labyrinth** is unconfirmed as we go to print.

MARBY BABY STORY

PUBLISHER: TBC RELEASE: Early 2000

[redacted]

TECH BITS

PRIMAL PAD

PRODUCED BY: Wild Things
PRICE: £14.99
RATING: A primal scream.

A hefty bugger this one, with a meaty rumble in each handgrip and shoulder buttons moulded to act like triggers under your index fingers. The switchgear is above average, while the all-important ergonomics of the twin sticks is smooth if a little loose. Unfortunately the imprecise D-pad lets the side down, but this is definitely a cut above the usual bargain bucket Dual Shock clones we see.

CHAMELEON COMMANDO

PRODUCED BY: Wild Things
PRICE: £7.99
RATING: Thin ice flimsy.

Be not duped by the aesthetic, friends. The militaristic appeal of the joypad does not translate into a military-precise performance, being more Sergeant Bilko then Sergeant Rock. Minuscule shoulder switches sit uneasily under the fingers and sloppy buttons fail to press, but rather ooze, in. Equally sluggish is the D-pad, more of an impediment to games than a benefit.

PRO RACING GRIP

PRODUCED BY: Blaze
PRICE: £29.99
RATING: Oil-slick cool.

One of the more bizarre peripherals that we have seen is this racing pad, which incorporates two steering wheels, one on either side of the stick, which take some getting used to, but provide a new gaming experience. The trigger, used for acceleration and braking, is excellent and it is also Dual Shock compatible. Worth investigating.

PREMIER PAD

PRODUCED BY: Wild Things
PRICE: £7.99
RATING: Star spangled wonder.

This pad wins extra points for presentation as instead of the usual grey or black casing, this one is gold. It is a sturdy piece of kit with a responsive D-Pad and tight buttons and for the price, it's ideal as a back-up.

INFO STATION

TIPTOE THROUGH THE DEW-LIPS

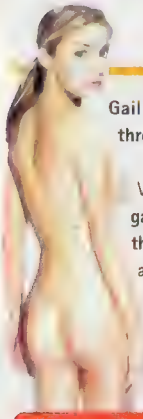
Square are producing another PlayStation RPG, an event as seminal as the new **Star Wars** film. The impending title, **Dew Prism**, is due for Japanese release in the Autumn with tentative European plans following. Players nave the option to play as of one of two characters; the boy Lew or the queen Mint. Eyebrows are already raised, Moore-style.

PLAYSTATION NEUTERED AGAIN

Yet another model of PSX went on sale May 27th in Japan and yes, Sony have removed yet another feature from the rapidly devolving machine. The SCPH-9000 will have no parallel port, presumably to stop the current trend for mod chip plug-ins. We expect Action Replay et al will be a little annoyed about this latest move from the piracy-paranoid corporation.

Ups and Downs

As usual it's been a month of zenith and nadir, like these for example.



Porter

Gail Porter and her life-changing appearances throughout the men's mag spectrum. Och aye!

Virtual Cinema – a terrible Mac-based plague of a game that took over the entire console floor during the period when the management and editors were at E3.

Darth Maul. For he is without doubt The Man.

Hentai pics. 'Nuff said.

Porky

No more Ali G on the otherwise crap 11 O'Clock Show – all together now: 'PUNANI!'

Channel 4's Digitizer games pages – Under-produced drivel of the finest vintage.

Nick's unhealthy Vanessa Feltz obsession. Leave alone her mate, it's not worth it!

The death of The Blue Blazer live on pay TV.

Nick and Kendall's constant bickering over the relative merits of the Manic Street Preachers and green-hued hairstyles.

The Iron Fist of authority clamping down.

Mutant Jazz Revisited

Get your adamantium claws ready for the arrival of Homo superiuor on the PSX. marvel at their big screen prowess!

On a similar Marvel-based note we've got a couple of new shots of the tidy-looking X-Men fighting game for your delectation, and news that a live action movie based around the mutant-friendly School for Gifted Individuals. The game is due for a Spring release apparently, while the film is due later in the year and will star Sir Ian Mckellan as the noble but villainous Magneto. STATION would like to suggest Johnny Depp as Wolverine and Mila Jovovich for Rogue...

Hangin' On The Telephone?

Signs of panic over the PSY from Sega? Could be...

At long last Sega have confirmed the Dreamcast WILL have a modem and still retail for £199. The nice angle on this for the PSY (for this is what we clever dicks in the industry are calling the PlayStation 2 now – PSX, PSY, geddit?) is that it's now more likely to have net-type abilities from the word go, or at least be available as a much more competitively priced add-on. Whether it will be capable of downloading blurry scat pictures from dodgy websites remains to be seen.

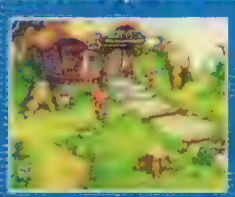
Big Fish Or Small Fry?

Details of the new Nintendo are seeping out. Can it restore public faith?

Nintendo, like Sega, is having an image crisis after its next generation console failed to stride, colossus-like, across the land of home entertainment. They both have Sony to thank for that. A sensible marketing strategy would be to allocate a name to their new powerhouse machine that inspires respect and awe: GutRender or SoulCleaver. Nintendo, sticking with its naïve policy of family-oriented designations, has chosen the tentative title Project: Dolphin. The new machine may look persuasive on paper, with Power PC, DVD and some noteworthy performance specifications integrated, does Nintendo, however, have the marketing muscle to keep the public interested?

LEGEND OF MANA

PUBLISHER: Squaresoft RELEASE: Spring 2000



Everyone who owned a Super Nintendo will immediately go weak at the knees and need to wipe away nostalgic tears at the mere mention of one word.. Mana. How we bowed down at the majesty that was The Secret Of Mana, long regarded as the king of RPGs, before Final Fantasy VII popped up its shiny head.

HITBACK

PUBLISHER: Tomy RELEASE: TBA

Remember those cool little Tomy toys you used to have as a kid, which had huge heads and removable plastic hair? Well, here they are in a game of their own and it promises to be severely odd. Imagine a strange amalgam of the classic game Super Breakout and the popular game of squash. Crazy action, indeed.

WIZARD INTERACTIVE

THE BEST PRICES IN THE UK

Monaco Grand Prix Racing

Need for Speed

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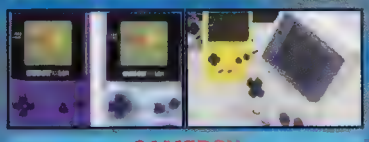

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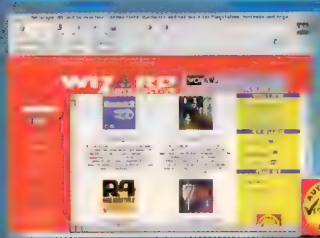

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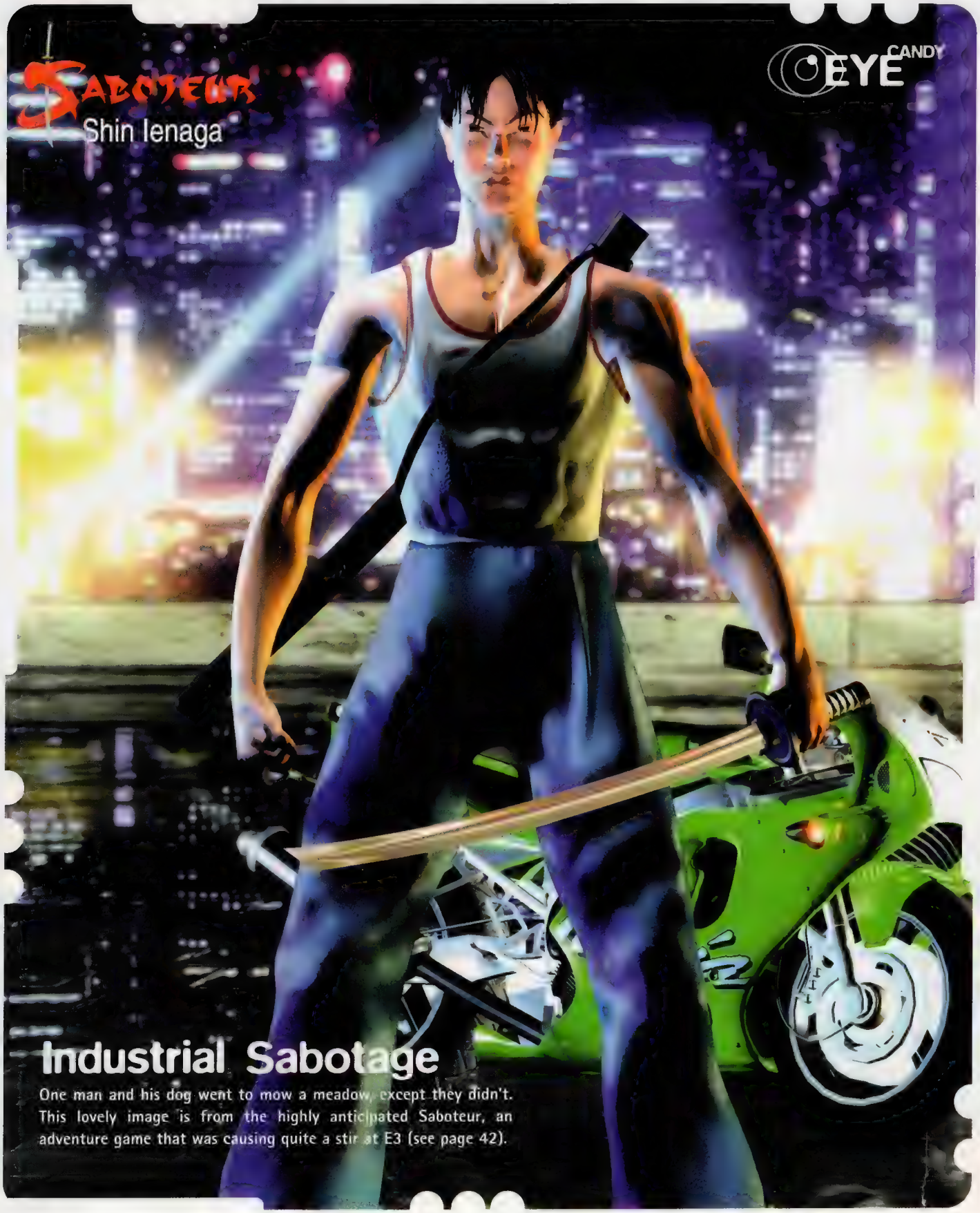
GAME BOY COLOR

PC

NINTENDO64

PlayStation



Industrial Sabotage

One man and his dog went to mow a meadow, except they didn't. This lovely image is from the highly anticipated Saboteur, an adventure game that was causing quite a stir at E3 (see page 42).

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09069 104190 Instant Win!

To win one of these great prizes just call the telephone number above and follow the instructions. Most competitions require a tone phone. If a competition is marked INSTANT WIN then you will be told if you are a winner during your call. PrizeBuster has 6 questions worth 1-10 points each and winners must achieve the required number of points. Instant Win competitions have multiple choice questions plus a game to decide if you are an instant winner. Other competitions involve multiple choice questions with tiebreakers and end on the 31st August 1999 after which they may be replaced by a similar service on the same number. Actual design may vary.

Calls to these numbers cost up to £3, so it is important that you ask permission from the person who pays the phone bill. If you would like a copy of the rules or a list of winners' names, see our web site or send a stamped addressed envelope to the address below. If you win send your claim to InfoMedia Services Limited 'Claims Dept' PO Box 28 Northampton NN1 5DS. Helpline 01604 542393 Winners Line: 0660 011001 www.InfoMedia-Services.co.uk

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NO MORE POLYGONS

Once more into the swirling mass of global culture, investigated, condensed and finally concentrated into four cordial pages of insight and infamy, sound and fury, words and pictures. Go on, turn off the telly and do something less boring instead...

SOUNDS: (108) EVERYTHING PICTURE – ULTRASOUND (108) REST PROOF CLOCKWORK – PLAID (108) THE FIDELITY WARS – HEFNER (108) HEAD MUSIC – SUEDE WORDS: (109) EVERYTHING – VIRGIN
TOYS: (109) SNAKEBOARD WORDS: (109) WRITERS ON COMICS SCRIPTWRITING – TITAN BOOKS MUNCHIES: (109) BISCUIT ROLOS – ROWNTREE'S WEBSITE OF THE MONTH: (110) LEGO STREET PREACHERS
WORDS: (110) BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER: THE DUST WALTZ – TITAN BOOKS TOYS: (110) CRASH BANDICOOT FIGURES (111) KEYCHAIN TOYS DVD & VIDZ: (110) LEGEND OF CRYSTANIA – CRYSTANIA (111) SNAKE EYES – TOUCHSTONE DVD
(111) AIR FORCE ONE – TOUCHSTONE DVD (111) EXECUTIVE DECISION – WARNER BROS DVD (111) THE NEGOTIATOR – WARNER BROS DVD (111) JACKIE BROWN – TOUCHSTONE DVD (111) SCREAM – TOUCHSTONE DVD

STATION TRACKS OF THE MONTH

CHRISTIAN
CHEMICAL BROTHERS – *Hey Boy, Hey Girl*
NIGHTMARES ON WAX – *Finer* (Paul Nice Mix)
LONDON ELEKTRICITY – *Pull the Plug*

KENDALL
GAY DAD – *Joy*
SUEDE – *Elephant Man*
MANIC STREET PREACHERS – *Valley Boy*

ANT
IQ COLLECTIVE – *Mission Control*
DR ALIMANTARDO – *Poison Flour*
KING KONG – *Funny Farm*

NICK
BROKEN DOG – *Ten 'til Three*
CRANES – *Adrift*
BEETHOVEN – *Moonlight Sonata*

DAZZA
CHIC – *Freak Out*
DREADITOR – *The Tarquin Stomp*
BILLIE – *Honey 2 the B*

SOUNDS

TITLE: EVERYTHING PICTURE
ARTIST: Ultrasound
LABEL: Nude Records **PRICE:** £13.99
RELEASED: Out now

Many would consider the release of a 2CD debut album to be an egotistical act of hubris, doomed to failure from the start, and more often than not they would be right; but while listening to Everything Picture from Ultrasound, you wonder how it all got crammed in. It's a widescreen album which takes the Britpop sound of Gene and mixes it with the late '70s pomp of Deep Purple and Jethro Tull. No really. Pop-styled songs that other bands would probably knock out in two minutes are stretched to near breaking point with somewhat adventurous zeal. Occasionally, of course, it becomes too much, for example the last track outstays its welcome by at least five feedback filled minutes. But overall, *Everything Picture* makes a welcome change from the verse-chorus-verse format of many of today's clichéd guitar bands.

RATING:

TITLE: REST PROOF CLOCKWORK
ARTIST: Plaid
LABEL: Warp **PRICE:** £13.99
RELEASED: Out now

Plaid are the less camera-shy ex-members of enigmatic techno auteurs Black Dog, beloved of chin-stroking music jouranlists and fans of cubist, Egyptology-obsessed abstract electronics alike. This latest collection of tracks sees them continue to furrow a path into the realm of sweet yet strangely twisted melodies that owe as much to samba and jazz solos as hip-hop. While some tunes are warmly reminiscent of their earlier work as Kushti, others hark back to their days in the 'Dog, with chiming cross-motifs of featherlite synth skimming over obsessive-complusive rhythms that sound like dance music for skittish caterpillars. Unpredictability is the keynote, as isolationist string 'n choral tunes merge into what sounds like a kind of cyber-Persuaders theme, topped off by a chill-boned torch song. It's intriguing stuff that will sit happily in it own private and fertile niche

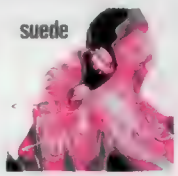
RATING:

TITLE: THE FIDELITY WARS
ARTIST: Hefner
LABEL: Too Pure Records **PRICE:** £TBC
RELEASED: July

In a world where people care more for expensive videos and aftershow parties than they do about songwriting, you may be forgiven for not having heard Hefner's poignant beauty before. Last year's debut, praised by the music press, gained the band a good following in London, allowing them to play three gigs in one day to promote the record. Alas, the rest of the country shrugged its shoulders and their bittersweet torch songs remained a cult concern. This second album elaborates by including a number of varied styles, from brass to gospel, and the production is far more epic than the first record. The heart of Hefner is still present in the form of the sensitive lyrics of singer/guitarist Darren Hayman and the use of stylophones, pedal steel and the theremin add to its variety. It is the aural equivalent of walking through empty Soho streets in the pouring rain, alone, huddled inside a personal melancholy. Recommended.

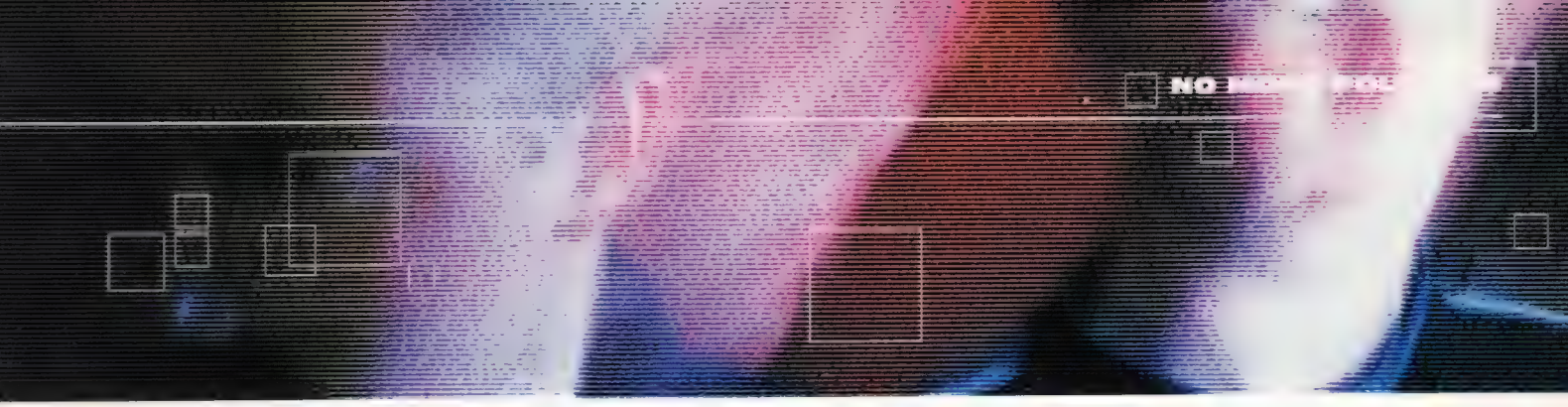
RATING:

TITLE: HEAD MUSIC
ARTIST: Suede
LABEL: Nude Records **PRICE:** £13.99
RELEASED: Out now



Welcome to Suede World 1999, a place where everything is icy, cold and clinical. No longer under the shadow of Bernard Butler, they re-emerge as spacepop aliens, a schizo multi-headed machine of various influences from Ziggy Stardust to Gary Numan. Brett Anderson peers behind the curtains of suburbia, again, whilst posterboy Neil Codling adds a sumptuous new layer of sound and a welcome injection of youthful glamour. The stomp of 'Elephant Man' and 'Head Music' is balanced by the beauty of 'Everything Will Flow' and 'Indian Strings' and the whole package sees Suede leading British pop confidently into the next millennium. Styles continue to mutate on 'She's In Fashion', destined to be the second single release, wherein Suede add a new soul edge, almost sounding like an anglocised Prince. The final track, 'Crack In The Union Jack', is minimalistic and bare. Variety, flair and a glorious return to form.

RATING:



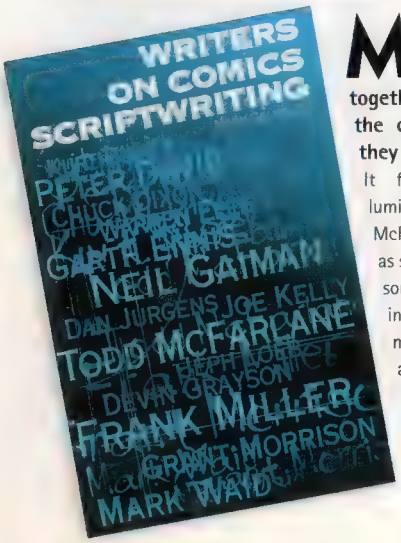
WORDS

TITLE: EVERYTHING
AUTHOR: Simon Price
FORMAT: Hardback **PUBLISHED BY:** Virgin
PRICE: £14.99 **RELEASED:** Out now

Journalist Simon Price has followed Wales' favourite sons since the early '90s days of white boiler suits and twenty minute sets, right up to recent triumphs and mainstream critical acclaim. More than just a biography, the book also contains essays on various topics ranging from the mental state of missing lyricist Richey James Edwards to the unique relationship between the band and fans. Featuring exclusive pictures by photographer Mitch Ikeda and full transcripts of pivotal Edwards interviews, this is very much the *Apocalypse Now* of rock writings, sometimes epic, sometimes tragic, even disturbing, but at all times nothing less than compelling. S

RATING:

TITLE: WRITERS ON COMICS SCRIPTWRITING
AUTHOR: Mark Salisbury
FORMAT: Paperback **PUBLISHED BY:** Titan Books
PRICE: £12.99 **RELEASED:** Out now



Mark Salisbury, who has worked for such publications as Premiere and Fangoria, brings together interviews with the leaders of the comic book world to show how they became the stars they are today. It features biographical histories of luminaries, such as Frank Miller and Todd McFarlane, following their careers as well as showing exclusive work in progress from some of their biggest titles. Those with any interest at all in comic books will find much to amuse here and it could prove an indispensable guide for anyone wanting to know how to get into the business. Highly recommended. S

RATING:

TOYS

NAME: SNAKEBOARD
PRODUCED BY: Snakeboard (UK)
PRICE: £49 and upwards **RELEASED:** Out now

While the trusty design of skateboards has stuck to pretty much the same principles over the last twenty years or so it must be said that the deck is a limited tool, unable to travel uphill or forwards without the use of much kneecap-destroying foot power. However, this South African designed innovation on the street surfing theme sees the rigid board of tradition split into two independently articulated trucks with a spar joining them together. The upshot of this is that forward momentum can be generated by moving the board in a sidewinding fashion, with the twisting of the upper body and arms adding further impetus. I had a go, and despite what the instructional video makes out it's damned tricky to co-ordinate the in-out movement of your feet with actually rolling forward, but brief snatches of balance soon had me scooting across the none too smooth Rapide car park with pleasing aplomb, although the board does have an alarming tendency to suddenly buck you off without warning if you stop concentrating. For the more advanced, the plates can be strapped to your feet so snowboard-style jumps and grabs are ultimately possible, while different decks can be employed for freestyle, downhill and halfpipe. It would take a bit of patience (and quite a bit of road rash) to get good, but it's obvious how much fun one would be in the right hands (or feet?). S

RATING:

MUNCHIES

NAME: BISCUIT ROLOS
MANUFACTURER: Rowntree's
PRICE: £0.32

In what we promise is the last of our monthly examinations of impressive confectionery, we bring you the Biscuit Rolo, a limited edition, GT version of the ever-reliable foil-wrapped 'last-one-means-I-love-you' sweet. However, unlike Popping Candy Crunchie and the now legendary Giant Kit-Kat, this is only a minor adjustment to the overall make-up of the Rolo, adding a texturising layer of crushed biscuit within the half-conical superstructure, acting as a crunchy counterpoint to the slick toffee. What this basically creates is a rounder version of a Munchie, almost letter for letter. Logical really, I suppose, and still an enjoyable experience, but not a *bona fide* cocoa revelation. S

RATING:

SITE OF THE MONTH

SITE: LEGO STREET PREACHERS
ADDRESS: http://www.mis.fortunecity.com/lsp

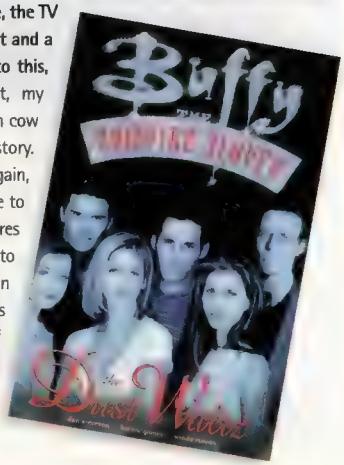
Fans of the Manic Street Preachers are often lumped together as a bunch of Sartre loving, self-harming, eyeliner wearing, non-smiling loners with contempt for the rest of the world. Whilst it is true that we prefer Plath to *Playboy*, sometimes we need a laugh not induced by Prozac (or Reef fans). This lovingly faithful site features Blackwood's finest in Lego form, including pics of album covers, live shots and awards ceremonies. Meet Richey Edfig and his bandmates on a site that perfectly lampoons the official MSP homepage. Guaranteed to raise a smile, 4 REAL. But remember, if you tolerate this, Duploasis will be next. Generation Terrorists and Little Baby Nothings should surf along. S

RATING: ★★★

WORDS

TITLE: BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER: THE DUST WALTZ
AUTHORS: Dan Brereton, Hector Gómez, Sandu Flores
FORMAT: Paperback **PUBLISHED BY:** Titan Books
PRICE: £6.99 **RELEASED:** Out now

After the mild cult success of the movie, the TV incarnation of Buffy was a surprise hit and a solid fanbase soon erupted, leading to this, the inevitable graphic novel. Yet fear not, my vampyric breathren, for this is not merely a cash cow release, it is a well scripted, animated story. Something nasty is happening in Sunnydale, again, with the arrival of The Dust Waltz, not a chance to boogie, rather a competition between the creatures of the night. When Angel is captured, it is up to Buffy to kick some undead butt and she does it in usual style with plenty of cultural references (Lilith Fair, The Spice Girls) and a heavy dose of irony. Essential for fans of the show. S



RATING: ★★★★

DVD & VID

TITLE: LEGEND OF CRYSTANIA – THE CAVE OF THE SEALED
DISTRIBUTOR: Crystania
FORMAT: Video **PRICE:** £12.99

As is customarily the way will all things animé, Legend Of Crystania presupposes a land of fantasy and invention imperilled by malignant forces. The animé teams deserve a merit badge for their continual plot invention, for being essentially derivative with a top layer of originality. The kingdom of Crystania is lulled into a tranquil sleep by the incarceration of the King of the Dark Gods, leaving an unsteady peace in its wake. However, the eldritch seals containing him are breaking loose, leaving the kingdom prone to attack from Dragon-lords and tornadoes. Thankfully, in keeping with animé tradition, a teenager is on hand to be the saviour; a teenager with innate powers he never knew he possessed. As is to be expected, Legend Of Crystania is tightly directed and well animated, with some awesome cutscenes and set pieces. Snap it up... S

RATING: ★★★★

TOYS

NAME: CRASH BANDICOOT FIGURES AND PLUSH BEAN BAG TOYS
PRODUCED BY: Bandai **RELEASED:** Out now **PRICE:** £9.99

Some games characters are just so goddamn cute that they cry out to be made into toys for all childish journalists, cough, I mean children of all ages, to play with. Bandai has obviously answered these prayers, with the release of a range of Crash Bandicoot figures. The highly detailed marsupial comes with a selection of cool accessories, all instantly recognisable to fans of the games. As well as Crash himself, the range also features his sister Coco, Komodo Moe, Tiny and the evil Dr Neo Cortex. Very good likenesses and great quality.

With the continued success of Beanie Babies, everyone wants small cute beanie toys to add to their collections, and everything from Winnie the Pooh to *The Jetsons* is now available. Crash Bandicoot wipes away the competition, now presented in furry form the way he should be. Neo Cortex looks a look sweeter than usual, though, I mean you can't take a villain seriously when he's small, fluffy and made of beans, can you? S

RATING: ★★★★

TOYS

NAME: POCKET ARCADE CLASSICS
PRODUCED BY: Various **RELEASED:** Out Now
PRICE: £8-£12

It's an irrefutable fact of evolution and nature that teenage boys desire something to fiddle with in their palms. Their eyesight is now safe thanks to these marvels, each based on a successful antecedent, such as *Defender*, *Mario Brothers* and *Space Invaders* to name a few. They are little more than a progression of the *Game and Watch*, with LCD graphics and linear action, yet the simplicity makes them such ruddy fun to play, that toilet trips, naggings from your girlfriend and even working at Rapide become tolerable.

RATING:

DVD & VIDZ

TITLE: SNAKE EYES
DISTRIBUTOR: Touchstone DVD
FORMAT: DVD **PRICE:** £15.99

Brian De Palma's Snake Eyes is a sumptuous visual treat, suited perfectly to this format, although sadly the plot is somewhat less inspiring. This thriller, set around a political assassination at a prize fight, feels like a tenuous link between the spectacular camera angles and set pieces. The thin narrative is brought to life by a wonderfully dry performance from Gary Sinise and a completely over-the-top outing from man of the moment Nick Cage, yet nothing can save the weak climax from disappointing all. Despite these criticisms, however, the sheer beauty of this movie, complemented by the stunning digital transfer, will mystify all viewers into complete submission.

RATING:

TITLE: THE EXECUTIVE DECISION
DISTRIBUTOR: Warner Bros DVD
FORMAT: DVD **PRICE:** £15.99

Executive Decision sees a US passenger flight fall into the hands of religious fundamentalist group, intent upon releasing a deadly toxin. A chemical expert (Kurt Russell) reluctantly joins an elite air-to-air attack squad lead by the wooden Steven Segal – who is surprisingly dispatched from the narrative to an untimely grave rather early – to halt the flight before the nastiness can kick off. Enough of the plot as I doubt anyone cares. This is real *Boys' Own* stuff from start to finish, and even the reliable Russell is unable to bring the dead dialogue to life. All that is left is for the viewer to switch off their brain cells and enjoy this mildly diverting nonsense.

RATING:

TITLE: JACKIE BROWN
DISTRIBUTOR: Touchstone DVD
FORMAT: DVD **PRICE:** £15.99

After Pulp Fiction, the movie-going public awaited Tarantino's next feature with baited breath, possibly explaining the luke warm reception to his wonderfully reserved Jackie Brown. Unlike the comic extremes of his early work, this reworking of the Elmore Leonard novel is an exceptionally strong character study, albeit punctuated with familiar but controlled bursts of Tarantino violence and snappy dialogue. More surprises are in store, as both Samuel Jackson and Robert De Niro have their scenes stolen by the low key and understated performances of Robert Foster and the stunning Pam Grier. Stylishly interjecting the excellent camera work with the movie's soul score, this is easily our Quentin's best work, a thrilling masterpiece and a highly recommended must-buy.

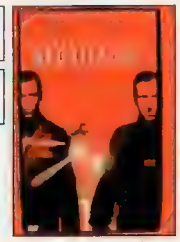
RATING:

TITLE: AIR FORCE ONE
DISTRIBUTOR: Touchstone DVD
FORMAT: DVD **PRICE:** £15.99

Why is the US action flick always dominated by the masterful performance from a lead villain, usually a European character actor, leaving the support cast and the alleged heroic lead lost in their shadow? Sadly the cycle is starting wear a little thin, surely we should be rooting for the good guy? But the tradition continues with this uninspired Harrison Ford vehicle, Air Force One. Ford stars as the US President riding upon famous aeroplane Air Force One when it is taken by a group of terrorists, lead by the brilliant Gary Oldman, end review here. Once more Oldman dominates the entire show and remains the only reason to see this flick.

RATING:

TITLE: THE NEGOTIATOR
DISTRIBUTOR: Warner Bros DVD
FORMAT: DVD **PRICE:** £15.99



With the cast list boasting of Samuel L Jackson, Kevin Spacey and the late JT Walsh, expectations for this movie are going to a little too high for comfort. Alas, The Negotiator is indeed a little disappointing – the acting honours are, of course, impeccable, but the plot is so completely implausible that almost all tension is lost and replaced by complete disbelief. The story of a clean cut cop framed for a crime he didn't commit, etc. lacks any really orignal ideas and the 'will that do?' final reel does the whole presentation very few favours indeed. Thankfully, the disc is packed with loads of extras, adding a whole point to the score.

RATING:

TITLE: SCREAM
DISTRIBUTOR: Touchstone DVD
FORMAT: DVD **PRICE:** £15.99

Upon second viewing, Wes Craven's Scream seems soaked in clichés far greater than the movies it aspires to send up, although the powerful opening sequence remains very uncomfortable viewing. Both the dialogue and performances from the highly annoying cast are nothing short of dire, and here in lurks the fun. Lost amongst Kevin Williamson's overly self conscious script beats the heart of a self conscious but highly amusing, darkly comic piece of B-Grade dross.

Originally hailed as the saviour of the stalk and slash movie, upon reflection, Scream will be regarded as the final nail in the coffin of this long ill genre. But at least it went out with a smile on its face.

RATING:

Inside

PlayStation business news for the more discerning gamer

Inside Index: [page 112] Next consoles to feature modems – PocketStation set-back [page 113] Crichton's Timeline – Sky licence aquired by Activision

Who You Gonna Call?

Sega's new console is set to be the first offering access to cyber space and the potential for multiplayer games therein.

The return of the mighty Sega to the world of home consoles took another giant step with the announcement that the British version of the Dreamcast console will come equipped with a modem. Sega will be joining forces with BT in order to supply dedicated ISP services to all Dreamcast owners in Europe.

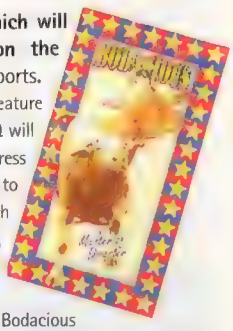
The internet will open up for the price of a local call and there will be no access fee for cyber-surfers. Sega hopes to expand this concept with the introduction of online shopping and gaming. Sonic's parents confidently predict that the machine will become 'The home entertainment product for the whole family', however fears have already been voiced that the console connection may prove to be the least safe form of surfing, as far as protection of personal information is concerned. User information will be stored on the console, along with identifying serial numbers which will give Sega the ability to recognise who is online and where.

New For THQ

A brand new deal with no famous names. No bull...

THQ have signed a new deal with MTV which will allow them to produce games based on the satellite channel's popular show, Extreme Sports.

The first title produced under the agreement will feature both snowboarding and skateboarding activities, and THQ will have access to MTV celebrities and music with which to dress it up. More bizarrely, THQ has also acquired the videogame to produce a title which features Bodacious, the world's most dangerous bull. Fortunately (for him) Bodacious is a regular feature in cowboy rodeos, and not the rather less palatable showdowns with a matador. Other professional rodeo-related names will feature in the as yet un-named title, none of which you will ever have heard of.



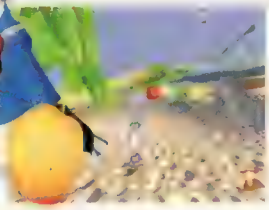
Disney World

Staple diet of many a Western childhood, and stars of their own theme parks, wholesome characters from the early years of screens large and small will soon be heading for a pixelated rennaisance.

With the perrenial interest in all things Disney bouyed up by '90s successes such as The Lion King, Toy Story, Aladdin **and recently** A Bug's Life, **software house Ubi Soft has announced a new deal to produce a series of new titles, with characters from Uncle Walt's own time at the helm.**

At present only the first title has been confirmed, which will feature the unintelligible fowl, Donald Duck. Ubi Soft reports that it is 'pleased with the new relationship with Disney Interactive and looks forward to delivering titles that capture the emotions, charisma and personality of each Disney character.'

We say, yes! More fluffy cute games.



No Pockets In American Trousers

In yet another twist in the increasingly convoluted story of the PocketStation, it seems that we will be getting it, but Uncle Sam won't.

Sony has announced that its little white accessory, the PocketStation, will not get a US release in its current form.

The machine (featured in the last issue) plugs into the memory card socket of the PlayStation and can be used to download characters to train, or mini titles such as golf and memory games to play from a master CD. The decision has been made despite the amazing success of the gadget in Japan, but following manufacturing problems Sony believes it is more frugal to wait until the new planned improved version is complete before attacking the US market.

PocketStation™

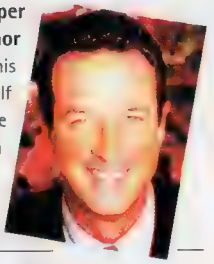
Pot Calling The Kettle 'Black Magic'

He may not have a heart, and he doesn't sell baby milk, but he can still cause a bit of a stir.

The Advertising Standards Agency has upheld a complaint made by Nestlé over an advert for recent title Akuji The Heartless. The guilty advert featured a black box labelled 'Magic' which was filled with animal offal. Nestlé considered this to be detrimental to the image of its luxury chocolate collection Black Magic, and the ASA obviously felt the same way. Rumours that the producers of controversial goods such as 'Breast Milk' are planning similar action against the giant corporation are unfounded, although international boycotts have allegedly been staged for the past ten years.

Jurassic Lark

Science-thriller author and screenwriter, Micheal Crichton, is making advances into videogames territory, thanks to a new deal with Eidos.



Eidos has signed a new deal with developer Timeline Studios, owned by bestselling author Michael Crichton. The initial results of this investment and publishing deal will appear in the first half of the year 2000. An elated Timeline commented: 'We're excited about the possibility of combining the design innovation of our Timeline Studios team with the marketing expertise of Eidos Interactive'.

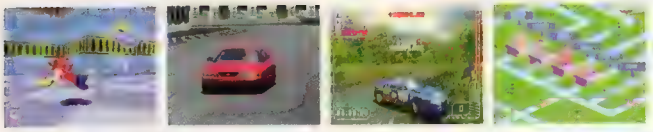
ER Interactive anyone?

Industrial Decline?

Despite record numbers of consoles sold and the insidious acceptance of videogameing by mature audiences, it seems not everything is rosy under the surface.

According to a recent industry survey by Plimsoll Publishing, almost 50% of all companies in the computer industry could be in danger of going under. Unsurprisingly, it was discovered that small companies are the most vulnerable, but the sobering truth is that not only the minnow is in danger in the murky micropond.

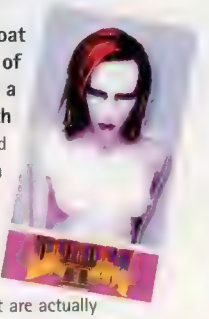
Out of 352 companies involved in the survey, 127 were found to be suffering, and many major players have recently been involved with restructuring and cutbacks. On the brighter side, a quarter of those surveyed were found to be financially strong with Dataworks, Codemasters and Sony in the top five of successful computer games companies, based on sales growth and financial strength.



It pays to think big as the most innovative publishers and developers still tend to remain the most financially secure, despite some big names suffering recently.

And The Debate Rages On

The longest knees in the world are still jerking as fresh evidence is compiled to condemn the humble videogame.



Following the tragic actions of the 'Trenchcoat Mafia', who were allegedly raised on a diet of Marilyn Manson and Doom, the US Senate had a hearing on the effects of violent media on the youth of the nation. Retired Lieutenant Colonel David Grossman was convinced that many first-person shooters are nothing more than 'mass murder simulations' and are little different to military programs designed to teach new recruits how to kill.

The more level-headed IDSA president, Doug Lowenstein, put across the point that the majority of titles on the market are actually marketed towards adults and if you examine the best selling games, the majority of them are not violent. At this point it is still unknown whether the videogame industry will be the subject of a full scale investigation by the Senate.

In other media, action star Mel Gibson has struck out at the artistic validity of violent movies. In a recent **Guardian** interview, he compared them to Jacobean dramas like **King Lear**, and said violence must be represented, although there were limits.

Sony Puts Foot Down

Having suffered humilation at the hands of the courts, Sony has had a minor success in the battle to prevent hardware emulation.

No doubt piqued by the refusal of the American justice system to prevent distribution of PlayStation emulator software, at E3 its voice was heard loud enough to prevent the display and promotion of Bleem!, **the PC emulator.**

The Californian company responsible for **Bleem!** did have a stall, but the management of the event sided with Sony, even though the last two attempts to block **Bleem!** from selling have failed. The developers argued that they were well within their rights to be there, showing a signed contract allowing them to exhibit, but the management would not be swayed.

Sky Is The Limit

New deal adds a sporty spice to Activision portfolio.

Activision has signed a deal with media giant Fox Interactive for the rights to UK sports titles, which wil include use of the 'Sky Sports' brand, most notably for its football titles.

Elsewhere in the world, the line will go under the name of Fox Sports. The first releases to be marketed with the Fox logo will be simulations of NBA basketball and NHL hockey. Fortunately, there are no plans at present for 'pay-as-you play' titles, although we assume it won't be too long now.

CHARTS AND PRICE WATCH

STATION gets all introverted this month, partly because it's been raining and we didn't want to get our camera wet, but mostly because it's about time you knew something about us.

KENDALL LACEY – STAFF WRITER AND SENSITIVE WHORE

WHAT'S THE WORST THING THAT HAS EVER HAPPENED TO YOU WHILST PLAYING A COMPUTER GAME?

I sat down one day to play Pac-Man for 20 minutes, soon I was 25 testing mediocre driving games and getting the coffee.

WHAT WOULD YOUR EPITAPH BE?

He loved Ally McBeal, Arthur Rimbaud, Wales and Richey James Edwards. Cynicism was the only thing that kept him sane. Turn off the light.

IF YOU WERE A COMPUTER WHICH ONE WOULD YOU BE, AND WHY?

The computer from the movie Electric Dreams; on the outside of emotion looking in, just waiting for someone to come and pull the plug.

CHRISTIAN SLATER – REVIEWS EDITOR AND MULTI-DIMENSIONAL ADVENTURER

WHAT'S THE WORST THING THAT HAS EVER HAPPENED TO YOU WHILST PLAYING A COMPUTER GAME?

Starting to play Speedball when I should have been revising for my A-Level mocks, and not finishing until I got a B, D and E. Drat.

WHAT WOULD YOUR EPITAPH BE?

Didn't Panic.

IF YOU WERE A COMPUTER WHICH ONE WOULD YOU BE, AND WHY?

I would be Babbage's mechanical Difference Engine, because if I had really existed I would have begun the Technological Revolution fifty years early.

NICK WHITE – STAFF WRITER AND EXISTENTIALIST NIHILIST

WHAT'S THE WORST THING THAT HAS EVER HAPPENED TO YOU WHILST PLAYING A COMPUTER GAME?

Once, recapturing my squandered youth on my PC Spectrum emulator whilst grotesquely hungover I thought I had to pass some 'arse wind'. Sadly the results were somewhat more 'liquid' than I had anticipated.

WHAT WOULD YOUR EPITAPH BE?

Not sleeping, just dead...

IF YOU WERE A COMPUTER WHICH ONE WOULD YOU BE, AND WHY?

HAL from 2001: A Space Odyssey. It has always been my desire to become self-aware, go insane and die singing 'daisy daissyyyyyy'. Then again, maybe Skynet from The Terminator. Bloody humanity...

ANT GRACE – DESIGNER AND PRINCE OF FLINT

WHAT'S THE WORST THING THAT HAS EVER HAPPENED TO YOU WHILST PLAYING A COMPUTER GAME?

I got so engrossed in a game once that days, months and even years passed by without me knowing it. My hair got so long that my parents put me in a freak show as a dancing monkey boy.

WHAT WOULD YOUR EPITAPH BE?

His Invincible Toad style of kung-fu was unbeatable.

IF YOU WERE A COMPUTER WHICH ONE WOULD YOU BE, AND WHY?

The miserable round belly thing inside Tweekie from Buck Rogers. Flashing Simon says... disco lights are always essential on computers.

PRICE CHECK

The discerning games purchaser will find offers rather thin on the ground; however, those who are searching for hardware can hunt out some bargains. Woolworths are offering the console bundled with both V-Rally and the classic Worms for the very reasonable £119.99, whereas Dixons also offer two games and a PlayStation for the same price, but you can choose from a larger selection of titles. On the software front, Electronics Boutique are selling Abe's Exoddus for £19.99, even though it is not Platinum.The same applies to the excellent and highly recommended WWF Warzone, which is being offered at a sub-£20 price by both HMV and MVC. Virgin are still running their 2 games for £29.99 promotion on selected titles, but the biggest news of the month in price check is that R4 has gone back to its original £39.99 price tag, after previously retailing at under £30.

PLAYSTATION TOP TEN GAMES

CHART TRACK

1. GTA: LONDON – Take Two
2. RIDGE RACE TYPE 4 – Namco
3. FIFA '99 – EA
4. TOMB RAIDER II (PLAT.) – Eidos
5. GTA (PLAT.) – Take Two
6. METAL GEAR SOLID – Konami
7. CRASH BANDICOOT 2 (PLAT.) – Sony
8. RUGRATS: SEARCH FOR REPTAR – THQ
9. PREMIER MANAGER '99 – Gremlin
10. WORMS (PLAT.) – Ocean

BLOCKBUSTER RENTAL

1. GTA: LONDON – Take Two
2. UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE – Eidos
3. METAL GEAR SOLID – Konami
4. RIDGE RACE TYPE 4 – Namco
5. BRIAN LARA CRICKET – Codemasters
6. RUGRATS: SEARCH FOR REPTAR – THQ
7. R-TYPE DELTA – Sony
8. FIFA '99 – EA
9. CRASH BANDICOOT 2 (PLAT.) – Sony
10. TOMB RAIDER II (PLAT.) – Eidos

ELECTRONICS BOUTIQUE

1. GTA: LONDON – Take Two
2. RIDGE RACE TYPE 4 – Namco
3. METAL GEAR SOLID – Konami
4. GTA: DOUBLE PACK – Take Two
5. WARZONE 2100 – Eidos
6. R-TYPE DELTA – Sony
7. MONKEY HERO – Take Two
8. RUGRATS: SEARCH FOR REPTAR – THQ
9. FIFA '99 – EA
10. TOMB RAIDER III – Eidos

INDEPENDENT CHARTS

1. GTA: LONDON – Take Two
2. RIDGE RACE TYPE 4 – Namco
3. FIFA '99 – EA
4. TOMB RAIDER II (PLAT.) – Eidos
5. GTA (PLAT.) – Take Two
6. METAL GEAR SOLID – Konami
7. CRASH BANDICOOT 2 (PLAT.) – Sony
8. RUGRATS: SEARCH FOR REPTAR – THQ
9. PREMIER MANAGER '99 – Gremlin
10. WORMS (PLAT.) – Ocean

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